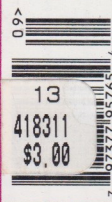


# LAW OF INERTIA



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*This Year's Model*  
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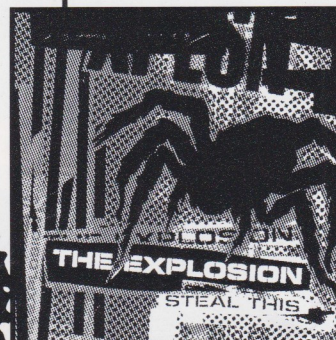
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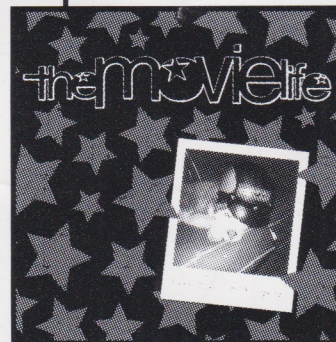
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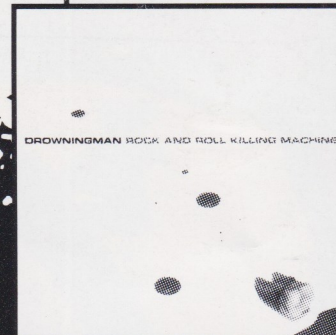
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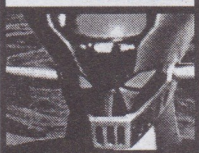
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# Law of Inertia

## Magazine

### Issue #9: Spring 2001

#### Thinks he's friends with Kirsten Dunst:

Ross Siegel

--Publisher/co-editor/art director  
Cowers at Jonah's feet  
E-mail me: ross@lawofinertia.com

#### Thinks he's friends with Axl Rose:

Jonah Bayer

--Co-editor/labor boss/inspiration  
Beats Ross into submission nightly  
E-mail me: Jonah@lawofinertia.com

**People With Pens:** Ross Siegel, Jonah Bayer, Jacob Futernick, Adam Lindenbaum, Nick Powers, Tim Holden, Heidi Diehl, Jon Orren, Adam Parks

#### People Who Hate Bad Records:

Ross Siegel, Jonah Bayer, Dan Frantic, Jason Murphy, du proserpio, Adam Park, Jonah Brucker-Cohen

#### People With Cameras:

Ross Siegel, Jonah Bayer, Ana Saldamando, Dayofthenu.com, Rachel Hill, Jerry Guzman, Mike Dubin, Sarah Sternau, Lauren Becker

**Microphone Check** (commas and spelling errors): Ross, Jonah Bayer, Dan Frantic, Nick Powers, du proserpio, Lyndsay Siegel, Jesse Mann with help from Luke Miner

**Cover Artwork:** Ross Siegel for Never Took One Lesson Design (ass kicking by Jonah)

#### Ad and Record Deadline for

##### Issue 10:

Check web page.

#### Distribution:

Entirely handled by Suburban Home Records; suburbhome@aol.com.

Among others, Law of Inertia is handled by Tower Magazines, Desert Moon, Ubiquity, Choke, Lumberjack, Revolver, Revelation, Sound of California, Insound, No Idea, Interpunk, Newbury Comics, Saul Goodman, F.A.B., Sonic Unyon (Canada), CR (Japan),

Green Hell (Germany), Trece-Grabaciones (Spain)

**Wholesale / Distribution:** We sell LOI for \$1.50 a copy to kids, bands, or distros wishing to order copies. Minimum order: 10 copies.

**\*\*\*CD Sampler\*\*\*:** For our next issue we are doing a CD sampler included with every copy (we might even make a few more to give out at shows). If your band, or a band on your label, wants to have a song on that bad boy e-mail us immediately and we'll get you the info. Songs will be handpicked by us so please send a promo of any song you may want to be featured. Don't send a song if you are in the Juliana Theory.

**Press Run:** 5,000 copies

#### Back Issues:

#1-#3 Soul Doubt

#4 W/ Elliott Smith, Boxer, Digger, Jets to Brazil, Piebald, Metroschifter, Rainer Maria

#5 W/ Jimmy Eat World, One King Down, Atom and His Package, Kid Dynamite, At the Drive-in, Adamantium, Bluetip, Fireside, Brian McTernan.

#6 W/ Saves the Day, Braid, Good Clean Fun, Time in Malta, The Grey AM, American Steel, AFI, Planes Mistaken for Stars, The Alkaline Trio.

#7 Women in Punk Issue W/ Indecision, The Muffs, Le Tigre, Discount, Rocket-fuel, Hit it or Quit it, Jejune, Co-Ed, Fiddler Empire, Susan Wills, Idle Hands, Apples in Stereo, Blue Ghost PR.

#8 W/ Botch, Berzerk, Hot Rod Circuit, 6 Going on 7, Murder City Devils, Hum/National Skyline, The Faint, Poison the Well, Lifter Puller, Silent Majority, Jimi Cheetah, Warrant.

All back issues are \$3 ppd.

Go to our website for more information on back issues.

**Review Policy:** The Law of Inertia review staff will consider all records

This very well may be the part of Law of Inertia I hate most: writing the intro to each new issue. You see, we try to keep LOI very personal. We try to maintain some semblance of connection of the writing and art directly to us as people. In our opinion, the people who work on it are the best part of our zine and also the reason we choose to work on zines in our limited spare time and not deliver our views to some international magazine in hopes of a modest cash reimbursement for our services. But, no one wants to hear us whine each issue about our personal and social lives. People pick up magazines to find out how great the lives of rock stars and celebrities are compared to their own. Right? I think that's wrong. And if it isn't then Law of Inertia is a failure.

If that statement is correct-- that people would rather see what goes on in the heads of Chris from Propagandhi or Adrock than their nearest and dearest-- then what is the point of the entire underground zine world. Or punk rock for that matter? What I love about punk rock, and I've said it a million times, is that the line between rocker and rocked is very thin. The musicians are not only kids too, but they are also fans and compatriots to the people they play for. Moreover, kids involved in the scene-- from those setting up shows, doing zines, putting out records, or just going to shows-- are just as important as the people who make the music. So, when someone reads an interview in a zine like this one, they are not necessarily deifying the people we interview, but rather gaining a perspective on people very similar to themselves who just happen to be quite good at playing the guitar.

The statement is wrong. People pick up Law of Inertia, in my opinion, not because they want to see what I or Jonah or Dan Frantic (LOI's former co-editor) have been up to for the past 4 months-- but rather because they want to travel with LOI's writers on a path through the trials and tribulations of adolescence and early adulthood. I think people like to see that we too have worked at Starbucks, obsessed about our favorite records, over analyzed musical genres, or become dissatisfied with the mainstream media and how it portrays all things culture and art. I know we have. And that's why we keep doing Law of Inertia. As Adam Lindenbaum said in his column for this issue: making for LOI happen is our relaxation, it is our solace, it is our baby. That is why I go to school, have a job, and run LOI all in the course of one average day. I do it because LOI has become more than just some shitty zine started in my bedroom a little over 3 years ago, but a symbol for me and my friends' love of creating something we believe in and feel strongly about.

So, check out this issue of Law of Inertia. Our ninth if you're counting. Jonah keeps telling me this is the best issue of LOI ever. That may be because this is the first issue he's seen all the way through completion, or it may be because this issue went smoother, faster, and less painfully than any other issue before it. For that I am proud. We think there is a wide range of topics in this issue; from hip-hop and punk, to political revisionism, to semi-academic exploration, to the personal ramblings you know I so highly value in a zine... in our zine.

Well, until next time we hope to hear from you soon. We love all your letters and e-mails telling us you think what we're doing is important or meaningless. Without your continued support and correspondence LOI is nothing but a bunch of computer bytes that fill my computer, and paper and plastic that fill my room. With that said, it looks like it's time to press the print key on the computer and do something that gives me more pleasure than almost anything else in the world: close another issue of my life.

With love,  
Ross Siegel

61 E. 8th St. #125 NY, NY 10003  
info@lawofinertia.com www.lawofinertia.com



I'll be honest; I'm not quite sure what I'm supposed to say in my first magazine introduction as an "editor." I planned on preparing an elaborate outline of everything I wanted to write about in this introduction. But at this point, I am so drained from all the work that has gone into this issue, that I just want to get this finished so that I can go to sleep before the sun comes up. If I follow correctly, this is supposed to be one of the areas of "personal" writing of LOI, and since most of you don't know who I am, I guess I should give you some insight into what's going through my head right now. There are so many things. I suppose I could whine about how I met (or rather melissa got her number for me) one of the only girls in LA that I saw the potential of dating, two days before I left. Or maybe I could complain about how much homework I should be working on right now instead of this introduction. But does anyone really want to hear about my petty problems? I doubt it. If you do, email me and I'll send you a list. I know that I can't stand it when editors overdramatize events in their life that really aren't that big of a deal in the grand scheme of things, and I'm not going to fall into that trap. If you want to hear whining put on a Mineral record, don't read our zine.

Besides, I am still trying to get my head straight from my recent transition from frantic LA mode to the snowed-in-pseudo-hippyness of Ithaca, New York. These two settings couldn't be more different than each other, and I'm having more trouble adjusting back to "college life as usual," than I thought I would. I'll admit that the entire time I was in LA, I was secretly excited to get back to Ithaca. Back to all my friends, girls who don't date actors, familiar streets, good restaurants, and most importantly, a town where I didn't have to spend an hour in traffic to get anywhere in the morning. Let me rephrase this- I was excited until I was instantly reminded of all the bullshit that's involved with living here that I had conveniently overlooked. Like being in classes with kids who constantly cut class and don't appreciate their education, girls who won't look at me because I don't shop at Abercrombie and Fitch, and the general lack of inspiration that this town can foster in me on those snowy days when it's seems like such a painful effort just to leave the comfort of my small room. That's why I'm so glad to have LOI. It is the one thing in my life that is a constant source of inspiration and affords me the ability to get these thoughts onto paper. Whether I'm raving about the new Hot Water Music CD or reflecting on my freestyle rap group, this is becoming more of a source of constant stability in my life and somewhere I can go to be inspired and hopefully inspire others. However about six months ago I didn't think that the issue that you hold in your hands would ever be completed.

Let's flashback to early August- "Jonah, I'm thinking of ending the zine." This is the way a phone conversation between Ross and I started out. In hindsight, I had seen this coming for quite a while. I couldn't really blame Ross, as he has recently enrolled in grad school at NYU and has a massive workload to worry about, in addition to his endless zine duties. We discussed several options, and after a series of phone conversations, I agreed to be LOI's new Co-editor. The last few months have been more work than I ever could have imagined, and I have gained a multitude of respect for whoever does a zine, especially with minimal outside help- it's not an easy undertaking. There are CD's that didn't get reviewed, interviews that were never returned, deadlines that were extended indefinitely, and late nights frantically tearing my room apart looking for undeveloped film. But I know when that stack of zines arrives from the printer in a few weeks, it will all be worth it. Regardless, it's time for me to go to sleep. I can hear the washing machine's steady drone beckoning me to my bed...

Devil's horns and power chords,  
Jonah

## Law of Inertia: Changing the way you think about country music since early 1998!

### Issue #9: The best issue ever

(CD format is preferred), zines, movies, books, and websites for review. Due to the gazillions of submissions we receive-- and the intention of not overloading each issue with reviews-- we cannot promise anything will be reviewed. However, if we feel that the submission fits our format then there's a damn good chance that it will receive our critiques... eventually. Note, please please please do not e-mail us to ask if your submission will be reviewed. That's really annoying, and writing a review while annoyed is never in your best interest.

**Law of Inertia Offers a Hearty Glass of Sweet-tea to (in no particular order):** Ross and Jonah's families (including Jonah's mean father), all the writers, all the bands, the love and support of Amy Fiddler (for being my fair/foul weather friend), Sasha Meltzer (even though Bela Bartok was Polish), Virgil @ Suburban Home, Pablo (my would-be girlfriend), Tim Holden, Jesse Mann (for being a great housemate to Jonah for putting up with Ross' endless 2 am calls), Mike Shea @ Alternative Press, Bobbo, Jimi Cheetah, Megan Callow (for making me feel like I matter), Trever @ Nasty Little Man, Ana Saldamando (for making my mom think girls like me), Nate and Dave @ Holiday Matinee, BS2000, Lauren Becker, Vique @ Revelation, Mandy Sauer (for listening to me whine about sex), Ms. Ashley Rose, Rachel Hill (for being a touchstone), Dan Frantic (LOI's favorite girl-crazed flake. Hope we'll be chatting Marx and contemplating Seuss for a long time to come), Jon Orren, Chris and Propagandhi, Jason Pettigrew, Rob Cherry, Norman Wonderly, Brent Antal, Todd Hutlock, Julie @ Urban Outfitters, Seth Seaberg, Micah Abrams, Dave Stone, Mark Burgoyne, Chris Rager, Nick Tamburo, Nick Powers, Benita Del Hussein, Bruce King, Gabe Handjob, This Year's Model, Kristen Nosek, Brian @ Counter Theory (for not thinking Ross sucks for being jaded), Duck-billed Georgipuss (and her delightful mom), Jonah

Brucker-Cohen, Nathaniel Stern (for being an enthusiastic soul), Chris @ Big Top, Maria @ Blue Ghost (for providing empathy), Mike @ Triple Crown, Justin @ Close to Nothing (for letting me know that my work matters), Dean Proserpio, Scott and Angels in the Architecture, Heather Ficklin (for making me do it over again), Carl and Nora/Ferret, Sarah Sternau, Ashleah Brack, Jay Simpson, Darren @ Hopeless, Brandon @ Girlie Action, Bruce at Kranky, Melissa Howard (for the girl advice), Kathy of Inertia, Dan "Mad Dog" Patton.

*The opinions expressed in this issue of LOI do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors. We especially refuse to be held accountable for Heidi's pretentious views on rap music, Tim's use of an HIV patient for comedic purposes, John's bastardization of the English language, Jonah's need to fuck celebrities, Ross' massive urge to start a holy war against Microsoft for building a shitty PC operating system that crashes and causes him to re-do all the work on the zine he put in during the past 3 hours, Nick's latent lust for Ben Affleck, the fact that Adam hates all modern punk rock except the records released on Second Nature, Jake's destruction of capitalist coffee domination, or Osama Bin Laden's war against the powers that be. We will take credit for anything that will get any of us laid by cute girls or boys without Promise Ring or Getup Kids' T-shirts in their wardrobes.*

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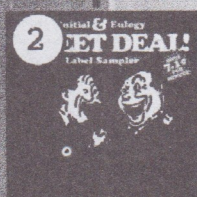
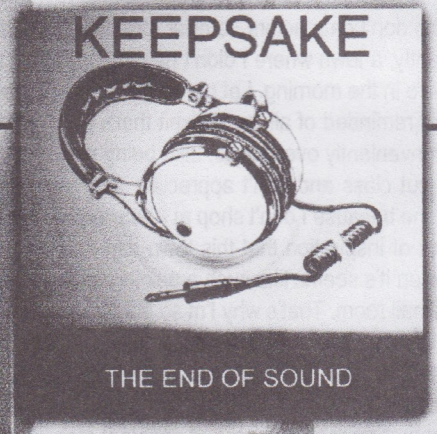


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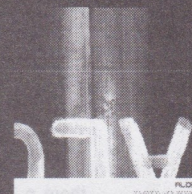
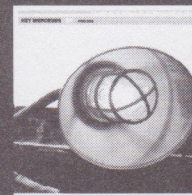
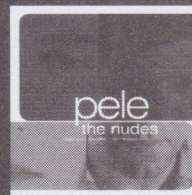
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# unsatisfied

## by ross

them a bit too much. Recently, I had a situation in my life that caused me to scrap two previous versions of this column and write the one you see printed before you. Specifically, that situation is what to do when the apple of your eye is just as (if not more) promiscuous than you are. Read on, you just might learn something about love, or at least something about sex.

The dilemma of the women in my life being more promiscuous than myself, and the problems it caused, first popped into my head when a good friend of mine declared to me, just as we started the essence of our friendship, that he is a whore. He said it flat out with not a hint of arrogance or amusement at the subject. He is what he is, or was last summer at least, and has no qualms with the state of his libido and his deft ability at the art of seduction. Of course he doesn't explicitly take money for sex. But, I doubt he is above allowing a woman to buy him a few choice glasses of wine before he accompanies her to a night of bliss. My friend, let's call him Pat to protect the uninnocent, went to San Francisco for a job this past summer. After years of long-term, monogamous relationships that more than quenched his healthy appetite for sex, but squelched the adept pick-up skills his looks and charm would warrant, Pat found himself in a strange city,

surrounded by strange people who knew nothing of his past nor knew how to defend themselves from his charismatic appeal. He quickly set to work filling the summer with long days at work and long nights in the bedroom. To quantify his summer, but not trivialize it, he slept with 7 women and had oral relations with a member of the hairier gender. Pat had no trouble with this concept. He was single, cute, and ready to explore nights of unbridled lust the only way unbridled lust can truly be achieved: through the ancient ritual of the one night stand.

As I mentioned earlier, Pat and I have become great friends since his summer of hedonism. So much so that I know exactly what the guilty smirk, with which he has taken to entering rooms of late, means before he utters those precious words: "Hey Ross, I got laid last night." Duh, Pat. That must be why you're clean shaven for the first time in two weeks and you actually look like you got a good night's sleep for the first time in two months. Of course that smirk signals that he

did not get a good night's sleep. He was, how do I say this modestly? fucking his brains out.

[Lately I have gotten the distinct feeling that Pat may be abusing his boyish good looks and I-act-gay-but-I'm-not-really-don't-you-just-want-to-fuck-me-because-of-it attraction. You see, lately Pat's libido has been so acutely hyperactive that he has taken to sleeping with good friends. I'll let you decide if Pat may be going overboard as we all know that fornication between friends leads to no fornication between enemies (not to mention the fact that he is going to burn in hell for his constant practice of adultery. I sincerely hope for Pat's eternal soul that he does not covet thy neighbor's wife. Wait... do Jews believe in that sort of thing? Oh well, Pat and I are going to hell anyway.)]

With that introduction I bring you to the topic of this column. We are all agreed that Pat was correct when he told me he was and is a whore. I don't think anyone who knows him well would disagree with that. Now, I realize that Pat is completely secure with his promiscuity of late and has, I think, little interest in pursuing anything more "meaningful" with any of the women he sleeps with. So, my question is this: do the girls he sleeps with feel the same way? Is it possible that some of them are sleeping with him merely for the sake of being with him? Do they feel there is no other way to be close to Pat and gain his affection and caress that does not involve sex? To further that point, if Pat fell into a relationship with one of these girls whom he originally intended on merely loving and leaving, would they care that he had been with plenty of girls in the past and may very well still have been enjoying sumpin sumpin up until very recently? My answer is that it is possible that any girl who

found herself in something above booty-call level and was cognizant of Pat's promiscuity probably would feel quite insecure with his level of sexual action. That is, of course, if they are just as (if not more) promiscuous than he.

The other case is that of another dear friend of mine-- let's call her Alexis. Alexis is not nearly as sexually active as Pat, actually she is a virgin. While she has been known to engage in the delights of oral pleasure it is seldom a regular occurrence. That is not to say that Alexis is any less beautiful than Pat's boyish good looks, or less magnetic than Pat's winning charm, but she has a tendency to pick guys who treat her less than she deserves. Therefore she does not receive the kind of tender loving care she so rightly desires.

If I were to date Alexis seriously-- and to be honest, the thought did cross my mind once or twice as we began our friendship (but don't tell her that)-- I would most likely have no complaints with the state of her sex-life. A little touchy-feely oral sex is nothing to get jealous over. No intruding thoughts of men violating her as I sit in front of the computer at 3 in the morning. Oral sex is nothing. I'm sure even my parents partook in a blowjob or two at some point in their lives (just not with each other I'd like to believe). The thought of some man licking a crush of mine into oblivion pales in comparison to the thought of some dude banging her like a drum.

You see my dilemma: I think I'm interested in the female equivalent of Pat, but my the small misogynistic side of my brain (that every man has) really want to date Alexis. The tricky part comes when I realize that I would love a mixture of both of them. First of all, I am a feminist. Yes, I have marched in "Take Back the Night" rallies and yes I rocked out with Rage Against the Machine and L7 at a Rock for Choice benefit. Similarly, I wholeheartedly believe that women and men have the right to screw as many people as they see fit. But, my problem stems from the fact that I have a crush on a girl who is just as (if not more) promiscuous than myself. And, it's not just the jealousy thing that gets my blood flowing, but also the fact

**Whores and angels. Or, what to think if the apple of your eye is just as (if not more) promiscuous than you are.**

I hardly think of myself as girl crazy, although I think I am the only one of my friends on either coast that is not crazy over the gender that fits their preference. Of course I think about girls as much as the next guy. After all, don't men think about sex every 7.8 minutes (how they figured that statistic out with any degree of accuracy is beyond me)? I love girls and I love being with them, and when I have someone I'm crazy over I tend to think about



that I'm not the only guy in her life. C'mon, I don't even think she feels a fraction of what I feel for her. Still I can't shake the thought that anything I could show her in bed would be nothing she hasn't already seen a bazillion times before and done better at that. I guess my fear is that in this situation I'm like a little kid who wants to believe the girl he likes is innocent and only has eyes for him when in fact that girl is not innocent and has been staring at pretty boy Pat across the street this whole time. Why am I getting so uncomfortable with the idea that the girl I like probably had much better sex than the sex she had with me? I have an idea.

As I so arrogantly stated in my "Love Line" article in the last issue, I'm pretty experienced when it comes to sex. I've had a lot of it when compared to either Pat or Alexis. I've been told I'm pretty good, although I have no misguided notions of being the Top Gun or what have you. I've always been pretty secure with my sexual abilities and I've never worried too much about my mere average-size unit. That is why I find nothing worse than getting intimate with a female who is far less experienced than myself. I'm not saying I need to be with girls that know twenty ways to make me come with their eyelashes, but everyone knows there is nothing worse than getting down to some good old nookie and realizing the woman you're with can barely even kiss to acceptable levels much less give a hand-job without fracturing your member. It may seem strange given all that I've already stated but there are few things more pleasing than experiencing a blow-job from a girl who really knows how to give head (or "went to blow-job school" as a short-lived romantic interest told me recently). So, why am I so insecure at the fact that the girl I have a crush on is just as (if not more) promiscuous than myself?

Perhaps, it's because the sex we had was less than stellar. It was slow and sweet, but under very bizarre circumstances which led to my discomfort. Let's be honest here: there's really no such thing as bad sex for a guy. Dante, the protagonist, from the classic film *Clerks*, said it best: "Making a guy come is simple. Take the penis, insert somewhere warm, preferably moist, thrust, repeat." That said, even

if it is as easy as they say for a guy to have adequate sex, there is nothing like steamy, hot, passionate, aching seeeeeeeeee. And the sex I had with this girl was not the type of sex I'm sure Pat is having right now or that Alexis is dreaming of. Instead, I think since I felt so weird about the circumstances surrounding our night of passion (and it was passionate... even with the mediocre consummation) because the sex was mediocre. Yes, I have had mediocre sex! Something no man has ever been able to admit to. I've done it many times before and I'm prepared, and happy, to do it many times in the future. But, that's why I feel so insecure about this whole thing. I don't even think it's the fact that I have a crush on this girl or the mediocre sex we shared that made me feel like this. Hell, I think if the situation were the same with any girl I'd feel the same way I do right now.

I don't think it's my feelings for the girl or that we had so-so sex, but rather the so-so sex and my crush combined with the fact that some guy out there in who knows where has probably done it much better than I and with far less emotion invested. The difference between this girl and all the other girls I've dated that are just as (if not more) promiscuous than myself is that the others I didn't care about as much (at least not all of them). Some of them I didn't even like. In those cases I could care less about the thought of them with another man. If it adds to skilled maneuvers in the bedroom it really didn't matter to me usually. And when I really don't care about the girl there is no pressure to perform and then of course the sex is unbelievable. Hmmmm, maybe that's why I'm obsessing over this so much: because I haven't had a chance to right my wrong and have good sex with this particular woman.

What I'm really referring to is pressure here. There is never any pressure in sex with someone you are delighted to have sex with and happy to remain cursory friends come the next day. In this situation both parties take it for what it is: a need to feel good through the act of copulation, nothing more. In an ideal casual sex scenario neither person takes the act you two perform to be anything more than just a fun way to pass the time. Pat knows exactly what I'm talking about. I fear Alexis hasn't realized that sex can just be a mutual need for physical satisfaction between two people. When one of the two people involved develops the understandable idea that sex should not be carried out in a purely casual way, and that the sex you two perform now is greater than simply lust, that is when things can get complicated. Not only because one person is obviously having sex for different reasons than the other (and I don't need to describe how disastrous that can be), but the quality of the sex suffers as well. Pressure is suddenly placed upon the act and pressure is the worst way to kill a good night of physical enjoyment. I fear for Alexis' sake that she will be the one who wants the other more than he wants her when she finally engages in the act, while Pat will be sleeping with a girl just like Alexis. In this case I am either a) Alexis sleeping with Pat; or, b) Pat sleeping with Pat. See the problem?

One source of pressure can come when one of the two parties feels inadequate in the equation. In this case those feelings of inadequacy stem from one party feeling that they are not pleasing their partner in the bedroom and that someone else out there has pleased their partner much more skillfully before. This, my friends, is the main problem about having a crush on a person who is just as-if not more-promiscuous than you are. How are you ever supposed to feel adequate? The chances that your partner was sleeping with cold fish is probably a pipe-dream. And, as we know so well, every man needs to feel that they are giving their partner everything in the world when it comes to sex in order to feel secure in the relationship (I can't speak for women 'cause I'm not a woman). Yes, this is quite unfair. No one said it wasn't. However, I am not making the case that men feel subordinate to their girlfriends' past lovers and that women do not. Instead, I think the social constraints dictate that a man be promiscuous and a woman not. It is quite easy to say that a woman is perfectly allowed to be promiscuous, but believing it when you're even the least bit involved with one who is can be an entirely different story.

Still, I live in a nation obsessed with girls being virgins. Britney Spears, Jessica Simpson, and even the guy from 'N Sync have all pledged their allegiance to the great God of chastity in the sky. In our great nation the Christian Right reigns supreme, celibacy is being outspent over AIDS education in



public education 3:1, and the world was shocked and amazed when Jennifer Love Hewitt finally gave it up to Scott Wolf on *Party of Five*.

People like Alexis are obsessed over their virginity. Why is it so sacred I wonder? I can understand if you believe God doesn't want you to have sex.

I can also greatly admire those who decide to part ways with their chastity belts only after they have found the one and only person they love. But, I unfortunately decided to take a different path. I saw little sacredness in sex at first and jumped on the bandwagon shortly after I stopped drinking apple juice with every meal (damnit, if only I could find where I left my virginity and reattach it). And, I love it. I love the act of being so close to someone, so much that you just want to crawl inside their skin and stay there forever. But, I can't help feeling prone to the endless supply of females in popular culture (yes females, find me one secular male virgin in the limelight and I'll give you a million bucks) who have come out and pledged their bodies for the sake of scruples. Can you blame me if somewhere inside my confused and disoriented psyche I picked up the idea that women are supposed to bare their sheets stained with blood after, and not before, marriage?

As any numbskull knows, America puts far too many social constraints on how different genders are supposed to act. For instance, stereotypically women wear dresses, while men wear pants; women have long hair, men have short hair; women like the color pink, men like the color blue. The problem in this case is that, yes, I believe that women can like the color blue, wear pants, and have short hair. As I mentioned earlier, I'm a feminist and a humanitarian and I believe anyone should be allowed to act as they please regardless of what society dictates. But, the situation becomes far more complex when one finds oneself in a relationship with one of those people. In other words, it's easy to believe that women and men are equal, but it's a totally different concept when you're interested in a girl with short hair or who spits or who has sex whenever and with whoever she pleases. Or is it? I am fully confident I am not the only person who feels this way. And, I'm pretty sure that I am not the only relatively intelligent egalitarian who has had some thoughts that might be closer to Betty Friedan's version of feminism than that of Susan Faludi. My question now: are we, males or females, really as progressive as we think we are in the 21st century? Is a woman not only equal in the workplace but equal in her bedroom as well? I would like to rise up, throw my fists in the air, and scream, "yes, you women are equal! Spit, chew tobacco, become construction workers, fuck anyone you please!" Then my conservative, Family-Values (and I don't mean the Limp Bizkit tour) side comes in and forces me off my podium with a less-than resounding, "just don't expect me to run to your side as your boyfriend."

Comparisons of gender roles between human beings and animals in nature have been researched to great lengths. Anyone who has ever watched PBS knows that male moose fight vigorously over who gets to mate the female moose. Similarly, we all know that male animals in the wild are biologically programmed to plant their seed in as many places as possible. If that means humping 400 moose a season to achieve the end result of a mooselet then so be it. The female moose is not necessarily evolutionarily programmed the same way. A female moose is programmed to mate with the male that wins the fight. She does not feel the need to hump as many males as possible (or does she? Food for thought), but rather she needs only hump as many males as it takes for her to get pregnant. Then once she gets pregnant she stays out of the singles bar scene until her mooselets are old enough to make it on their own. So, are humans programmed the same way? Are humans biologically programmed to follow the laws that nature has so narrowly placed in front of the female moose? Or, after years of evolution-- and the fact that humans have the capacity to think for themselves, unlike moose-- can we climb out of nature's guidelines and potentially create a mate selection process that is not as superficial?

To return to the point of this column, I feel like a male moose. I am happy to mate as many females as possible, but I get stuck when I find that my she-moose has also been mating lots of males. Part of me wants to ignore the fact that most twenty-something women have been with plenty of men, but the other part of me can't get the idea that I'm not the only eligible creature in the forrest. But the moose analogy only goes so far. Unlike Pat, moose do not have meaningless sex. There is no such thing as casual sex for a species that instinc-

tively mates in order to maintain its lineage throughout the years. Perhaps this is what is meaningless about meaningless sex. That sex for no purpose other than to get off is something that rarely happens in nature. Forget what the bible tells you. Maybe the reason humans like myself have so much trouble with the baggage that comes along with casual sex is because I am programmed to see sex as something that is shared between a man and a woman for a common goal. In a word, that goal is procreation. Then how do you explain the fact that

I like casual sex so much and often times seek it out with much more interest than I do a life partner with whom I could potentially have a child (and how does the fact that I have absolutely no problem with homosexuality come into play as well)?

I hate to admit it, but the Christian Coalitions and Britney Spears of the world may be winning a battle some of us think is not even worth waging. Or, maybe the battle isn't anything new, but something the stuffed shirts have been fighting and winning since the dawn of time. Is it possible that people like Pat will never amount to anything in the emotional realm since he has absolutely no problem with his sex intake? Is it possible that Alexis will be a superstar one day for her quest to conform to nature's standards? I don't think either one can be answered with any certainty. Instead, I think everyone of us needs to take a more considerate look at gender roles and the constraints therein. We also need to examine sex to a greater extent. This may sound like something that has been said millions of time before, but I don't think it has in this way. I think aggressively promoting abstinence in children will lead to a lot of disappointed and confused teenagers. I mean, I was never taught abstinence and look how distressed I am.

I guarantee you it only gets more confusing from here on in.



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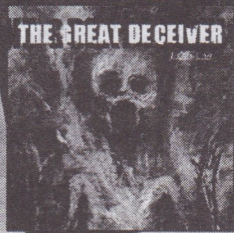
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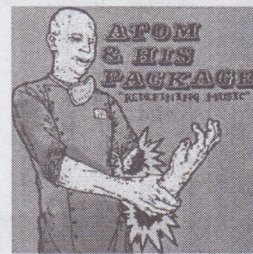
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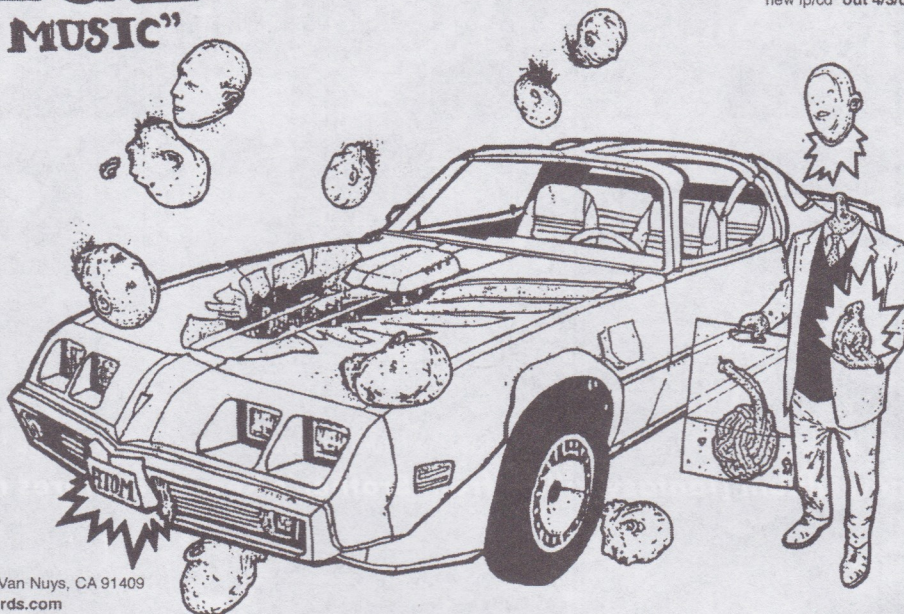


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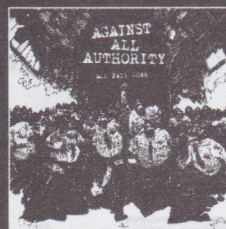
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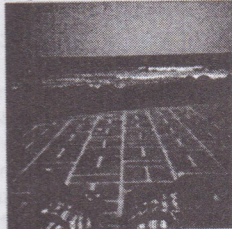
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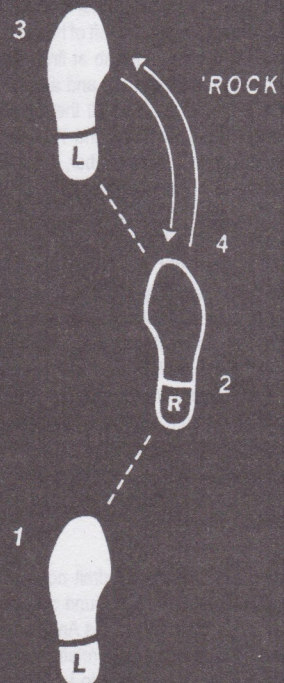
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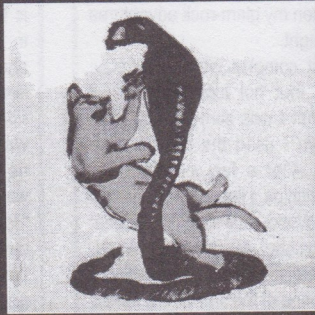
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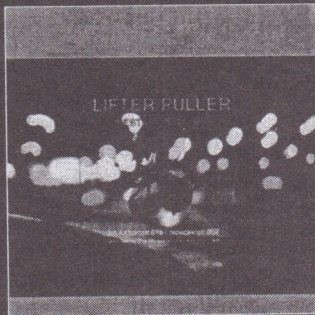
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# Diary of a Madman:

## A quest for Glam-Rock Adventures in the City of Angels

I spotted him from across the street. I was standing on the corner of Hollywood and Vine, bright lights and loud music blaring at me from every direction. I only saw him for a second, before losing him in a sea of drunken twenty-somethings. "It couldn't have been him," I thought to myself, as I began my sordid walk home down Hollywood Avenue. However, as I meandered down the street, steadily nagging in the back of my head was the notorious "what if?" question. Shocking even myself, I turned and raced across the congested street, with no regard for the blaring car horns and strings of obscenities being hurled in my direction. Out of breath and growing increasingly desperate, I pushed my way through the crowd, only to realize that it was too late- he was gone. Desperately needing a beer after this emotionally and physically draining ordeal, I decided to duck into a dingy bar at the end of the block to get a drink. Upon entering, the smoke was so thick that I almost started to choke. I contemplated leaving, instead settling on walking with my head down and making my way to the bar. That's where I saw him sitting by himself- a beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other. It was none other than Axl Rose. I sat down at the vacant stool to the left of him and introduced myself. He was a bit standoffish at first, but after a few drinks he began to loosen up, and asked if I wanted to party with him. Axl and I hit all the hot spots that night, the Viper Room, the Roxy, and The Rainbow Room, finally ending up in front of Skybar, unsuccessfully attempting to fend off hordes of women. For those of you who have your doubts, let me tell you- Axl Rose is still Axl Rose- and women still flock to him like sheep. Towards the end of the night, Axl started to really open up to me. He talked candidly about how depressed he had been for the last eight years, admitting he wasn't sure what direction he wanted to take with his life. I learned a lot about Axl that night, and by the end of the night I had even forgiven him for releasing the ill-fated "Spaghetti Incident" album. After a crazy night of drinking binges and late-night cruising with Axl, he dropped me off at my apartment and I watched his "GNSFNRS" vanity plates disappear as the sun rose over the smoggy Los Angeles skyline...

Okay, I'll admit none of this is true- but it should be. When I first found out I would be spending a semester of school in Los Angeles, I envisioned these Rose-esque jaunts as a relatively frequent occurrence. While I had never been to LA before, from what I had seen in the media, it seemed like a Mecca of adventure and excitement (not to mention being the birthplace of glam-rock). Now, looking back on the experience, I feel somewhat cheated. Not to say that there weren't a few memorable evenings and lasting friendships made during my time out west. However, these adventures

seem relatively tame in comparison to what I was hoping for. Fine, maybe Axl Rose was a tad unrealistic, but what about Slash? Hell, I would have settled for sharing a bathroom with Dizzy Reed! But before I get too far ahead of myself, maybe I should explain why I was in Los Angeles and exactly what I was supposed to be doing there.

It all started towards the end of my sophomore year, when I picked up the application from our Dean's office. You see, through Ithaca College's Roy G. Park School of Communications, I had become eligible to participate in the "prestigious" Los Angeles program. Basically, it consisted of taking a minimal amount of class work, and getting class credits by living in LA and completing a designated amount of hours at one or more internships. I knew it would beat the Ithaca weather, and I was ready for a change, so I decided to go for it. I was going to live with three of my friends, including Jay (trusty cameraman for the Whatever Dudes- see issue eight). Jay and I planned on driving cross-country, partially because I've read too much Kerouac, but mostly due to that the fact that I would need my car once we got to LA. Our drive out west could be another column all together, but for the sake of this column let's just say it had it's high points and it's low points...really low points. The worst part of our road trip had to have been the night that Jay and I couldn't find a hotel room, so we were forced to sleep in the car -which was incidentally parked in a Jack in the Box parking lot. Adding to my feelings of frustration at our predicament, was the fact that Jay thought it would be a great idea to document this nightmare on video, as I unsuccessfully attempted to get some sleep. Let me tell you, there is nothing worse than trying to sleep in a Toyota Corolla at five in the morning, in a seat that can't be reclined due to all the crap in the backseat- with a video camera shoved in your face. We did however get to visit Zion National Park in Utah, a Wal-Mart in Kansas with some of the most beautiful women we had ever seen, and even get harassed by overzealous bouncers with LOI founder Ross Siegel in his hometown of San Francisco. Finally, in mid-August we arrived in Los Angeles, and that's when my glam-rock adventures were to begin...or so I thought.

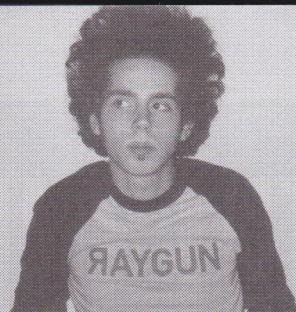
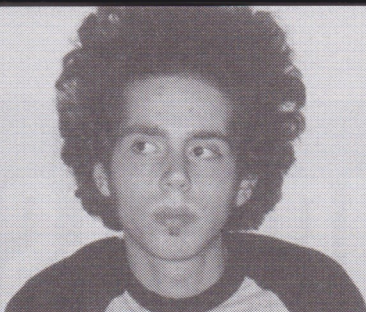
Our apartment complex was pretty ritzy: complete with two pools, four hot tubs, and lots of hot wanna-be actresses that I was sure it would only be a matter of time before I used the hot-tub as a nightly make-out location. After a few interviews for various music-related internships, I settled on the music department at MTV's Real World, as well as an editorial internship at Raygun Magazine. At The Real World, I assisted the Music Supervisor and helped pick out music to use in the background of the show. As it turned out, The Real World uses a lot of indie music, and although I was working indirectly for MTV, I still got to deal with a lot of the same people and labels that I do through the zine. Next time The Real World is on,

before you change the channel, listen closely to the music in the background. You never know when you're going to hear Sunday's Best or the Appleseed Cast. The Raygun internship (yes, they are still a magazine) was also really amazing, and I had the freedom to do just about anything I wanted and work with some really talented editors and photographers. Oh yeah... and what about class? Let me put it this way: I had class one night a week and it consisted of watching "Die Hard III: With a Vengeance," one week, and "Fight Club" the next. Trust me, film theory was never this bloody. After I had been in LA for a few weeks and settled in at both of my internships I should have been content with my situation. I mean there I was in sunny Los Angeles, instead of freezing to death in the snowbelt that is upstate New York. Plus, my internships were much more exciting and fulfilling than any classes I had ever taken in my life. Yet deep down, I thirsted for something more. I was searching for the excitement that only the glitz and danger of Los Angeles can offer. My jaunts to the Sunset Strip (The most likely place to spot Axl, or so I figured) were fairly infrequent, since there didn't seem for any reason to head down to that part of town. However, that isn't to say that I didn't encounter some feathered hair and over-the-top guitar solos while in LA. Here's a quick recap:

## • C.C. Deville's Samantha Seven at the Viper Room

For those of you unfamiliar with C.C. Deville, he is none other than the lead guitarist for the legendary 80's glam rockers, Poison. Nowadays, C.C. is also the frontman for a power pop band called the Samantha Seven, and when I found out they were playing every Sunday at the Viper room, I had no choice but to go and pay homage to one of my biggest musical influences. I went to the show with my friend Christian, and while the glam-metal scene in LA isn't as thriving as it was ten years ago, there was still a decent crowd milling around in front of the stage when we arrived. Unfortunately, it seems that even the glam-metal scene has evolved since it's heyday in late 1980's. What I mean by this, is the fact that I was surrounded by more young men in tight fitting clothing and spiked hair than mullets and leather pants, but what could I do? The girls also seemed a bit tame in comparison to the wild groupies I had seen on Def Leppard's "Behind the Music," but I wasn't there to meet girls, I was there to see C.C. When he emerged from behind the crushed velvet curtain, I was puzzled to hear that he didn't have that ultra-nasal "Joe Pesci" voice, which was so evident in Poison's own VH1 documentary. In fact, C.C. was in top fashion (looking much better than Warrant's Jani Lane in the last issue), telling raunchy jokes between songs one minute (personal favorite: "I hate every bone in your body but mine), and introducing the crowd to his bemused parents seated in the back of the club soon after. He played an hour long set full of energy and catchy pop





## by Jonah Bayer

hooks, and although I was secretly hoping to hear a Poison tune or two, I wasn't expecting it. That's why I was caught off-guard when I heard him say, "Does anyone want to do Poison karaoke?" I jumped at the chance (the few beers I had earlier also helped) and next thing I knew, myself and a few other lucky fans we're up on stage with C.C., and I was screaming the lyrics to "Talk Dirty to Me" into the microphone. For those unfamiliar with the tune, the chorus goes something like, "Cause baby we'll be at the drive-in, in the old man's Porsche, behind the bushes, 'til I'm screaming for more." Aside from being a great song, re-read the chorus and you'll realize it's also where one of indie rock's heavy hitters (and Grand Royal darlings) name originated. During the song I kept glancing over at C.C., because I was still couldn't believe that we were actually sharing the same stage. However, my beliefs were confirmed when he pulled off the guitar solo note for note with a giant smile on his face. After the song, I had the chance to meet C.C., and he actually thanked me for coming up on stage and singing with him. I met my fair share of celebrities while I was in LA but I can honestly say this was the only time that I truly felt "starstruck." For those of you that have your doubts, take a listen to the guitar work on Poison's "Open up and say...Ahhh!" and try to tell me that you wouldn't be starstruck as well.

### • 1st annual VH1 Video Music Awards, The Shrine Auditorium

I still don't know exactly how I ended up getting tickets to this, but I believe it had something to do with Jay having a friend who worked for VH1. At any cost, on a muggy Los Angeles evening, I ended up standing outside the Shrine Auditorium with my roommates, where the likes of U2, The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Metallica, No Doubt, and yes, even Christina Aguilera, were scheduled to rock the house. But that's not all. Most importantly, 80's glam rock veterans Bon Jovi were scheduled to perform their new hit single, "It's My Life." I had never seen Bon Jovi before, and while I liked their new single, I was really hoping they'd surprise everyone and play a tune from the classic "Slippery when Wet"-era. When we first got there, we stood next to the red carpet for a while and watched the celebrities file in, but honestly I wasn't really as adamant about seeing the stars as most of the frenzied ticket-holders surrounding me. I'm sorry, but someone yelling, "I think I just saw Dave Matthews!" doesn't really excite me too much. I was a bit surprised to find that upon our entrance to the shrine, the upper level (read: non-celebrities) was fairly empty. It was still fairly vacant when U2 opened the show, but about a third of the way into the awards the rest of the crowd finally filed in from outside. U2's fantastic rendition of "Beautiful Day," was followed by a frighteningly out-of-key Anthony Kiedis during a Chili Peppers performance, a stellar Gwen

during the No Doubt performance, and a toothpick sized Christina Aguilera running around in a skirt—which drew absolutely no complaints. However not even Christina could distract me from my main goal of the evening, seeing Bon Jovi (and also avoiding Creed). Then suddenly, as I was sitting in my uncomfortable fold-up seat studying the schedule to figure out when Creed was going on so I could make my getaway, the lights dimmed, and a surprisingly good-looking Bon Jovi hit the stage. As soon as Richie Sambora began playing the songs main riff while sucking on the tube from his "Talk Box," I knew I was about to witness something special. Although I only saw Bon Jovi perform one song, I was still floored as I checked them off of my glam-rock wish list. Following Bon Jovi was Metallica, but they performed outside and when I raced to the doors I was informed that we weren't allowed to leave the venue to watch them. Whatever, those guys aren't pretty enough to be glam anyway. We decided to make our escape right after Metallica's performance and on our way out I stopped at the bar to grab a drink. While I was waiting for my beverage, I glanced to my left and recognized none other than Rick(y) Schroeder of "Silver Spoons" fame on a cell phone next me. I gave Rick(y) a quick head nod, grabbed my drink, and walked out the door. I could catch up with Rick(y) at another time. Right now I didn't have time for small talk with washed-up child actors. I had a mission- to seek more glam-rock adventures on the Sunset Strip.

### • Universal Studios, Jurassic Park water ride

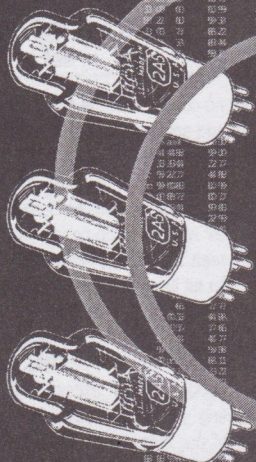
I might as well be up front about this story right now. I know there is nothing even slightly glam-rock about Universal Studios. Nevertheless, one of the most insane adventures I had in LA was when I played hooky with one of my bosses and ditched work to sneak into this gigantic theme park. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary when I wandered into one of my internships one day, expecting to continue with some paperwork that I had been working on most of the week. Instead, my "boss" asked me nonchalantly if I wanted to skip work and sneak into the Universal Studios theme park. After we finished gloating to our co-workers about our ensuing adventure, we piled into his car and headed off to Universal City. Justifiably, the security to get into Universal Studios- where they tape a plethora of television shows and movies- is pretty tight. So when we pulled up to the security booth I wasn't sure exactly what to expect. My boss proceeded to say he needed to pick up videotape from someone named "Juan" who worked for a production company on the lot. What I thought would be a quick conversation with the security guard grew more and more lengthy, so I began to tune out and ponder how I was going to explain to my parents and my college advisor why I was arrested trying to scam my way into a theme park. I could say that my boss forced me, or better yet that I was secretly

drugged and had no control over the situation. I glanced back at my boss and smiled at the thought of the latter possibility. I was still pondering my alibi a few minutes later, as we were waved into the parking lot with a temporary-parking sticker on the windshield. When I asked who "Juan" was, my co-conspirator casually responded, "Oh yeah I made that name up. So which ride do you want to hit first?" We wandered around the park for a while trying to find a ride, finally settling on the JurassicPark Water ride since we were strapped for time. As we stood in the line, I looked around and noticed that everybody with the exception of my boss and I were donning yellow rain parkas. We decided that since most of our fellow adventurers weren't old enough to be in high school, we should have no problem handling the ride without the protective rain gear. In retrospect, this was not such a good idea. Here's a tip to future theme park delinquents: If everyone else is wearing rain ponchos it does not make you cool to "go against the norm," it just makes you really, really wet. However as I walked back into work still dripping wet from my adventure, for once, instead of thinking about Axl I thought about how much I needed a job that would afford me the freedom and immaturity that I had just experienced. At that moment, I'm sure Axl would have been proud.

Getting back to the glam, I did get to correspond with Poison co-conspirator turned animal rights activist Rikki Rockett (who never returned my interview) as well as a chance encounter with Tommy Lee on Melrose, but I didn't encounter Axl even once during my time in LA. However, looking back on the experience, the glitz and glamour isn't what I really wanted. It's just what I had been conditioned to covet, by the media. I realized that I would rather go to a show, than try to get into a trendy bar in hopes of catching a glimpse of Tori Spelling. I also learned that the city, or any place for that matter, is what you make of it, and if you are content to sit around your apartment all day complaining about how bored you are, nothing is going to change. For all the fake people and plastic smiles I encountered during my time in LA, I met equally as sincere kids who were unfazed by the imposing surroundings, and were as real as they come. It was somewhat refreshing to walk out of an At The Drive-In show filled with middle-aged record execs, and have a gang of kids on the street selling their zine for a dollar. A mask of greed and glamour shrouds the city of Los Angeles itself, and I'm sure a lot of the stories of corruption and greed you've seen on TV are true. But if you dig beneath the façade, it's really just like any other place in America, with it's own hidden beauty, all-night hangouts, and bored teenagers. Finally, to answer the eternal question: No. Chances are if you go to LA you won't see any members of Guns N' Roses. In the end, I didn't party with Axl, but I got to talk dirty with C.C., and that's good enough for this metalhead.



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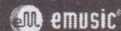
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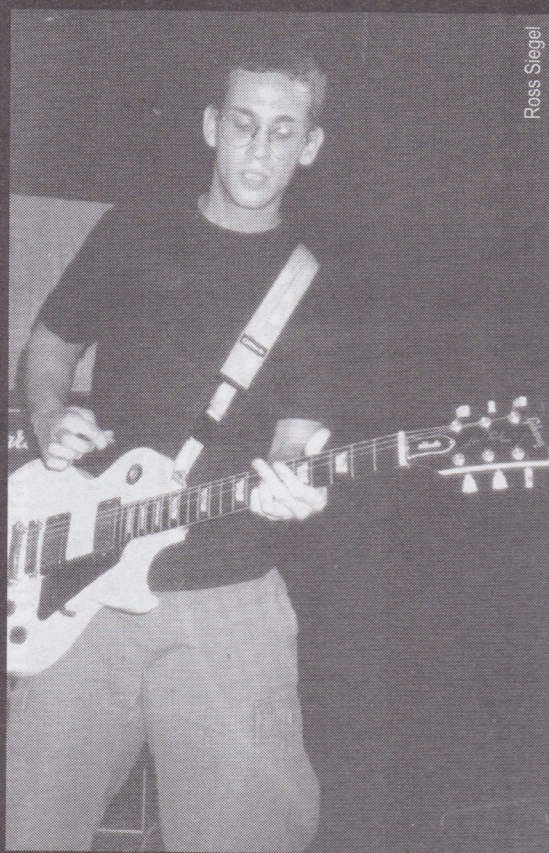
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# Photo Gallery

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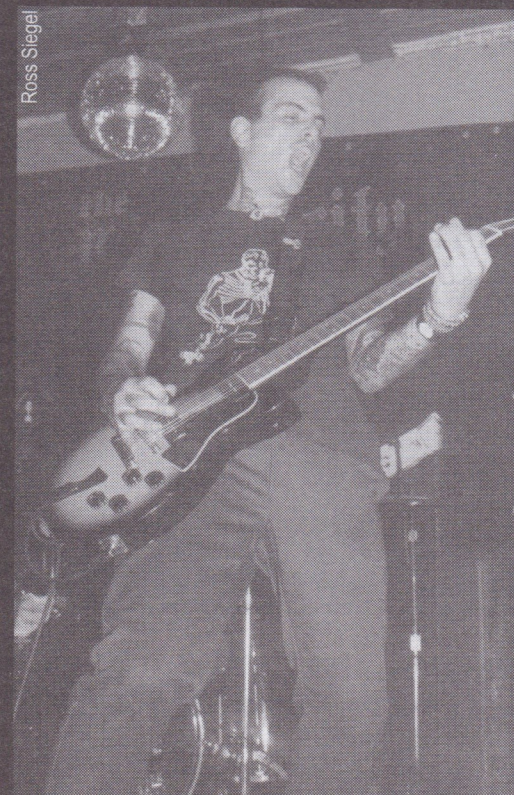


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**Botch**

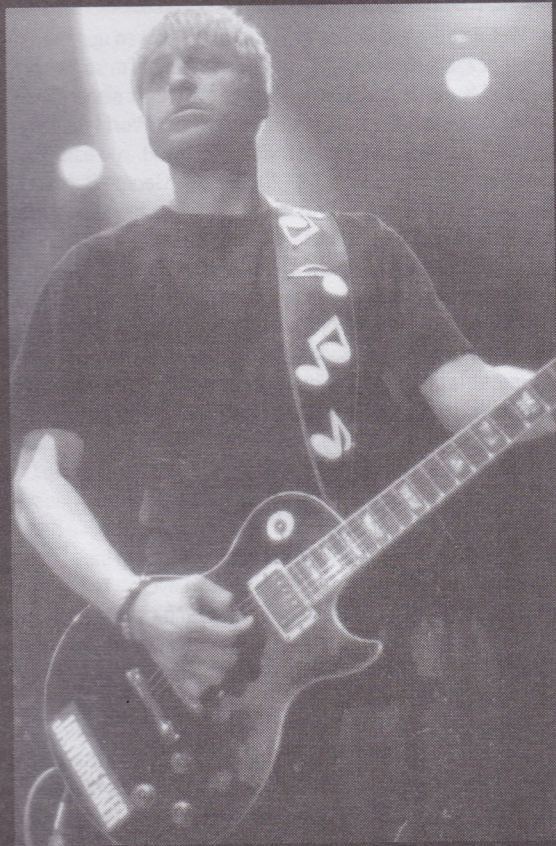


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**Murder City Devils**



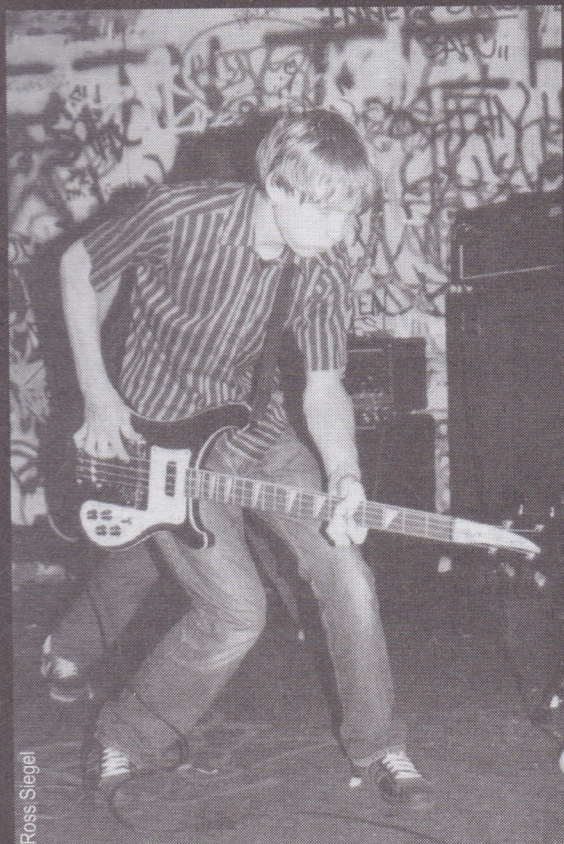
# Nerf Herder



# The Faint

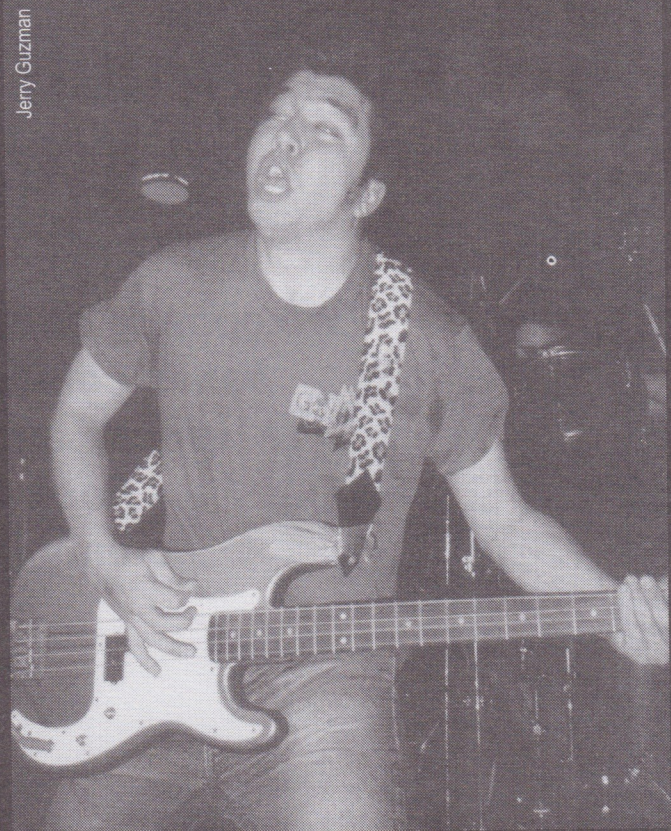


Ana Saldamando



Ross Siegel

# Engine Down



Jerry Guzman

# Converge



So here we are again. Another day another issue to gossip about our favorite punk superheroes. Well first the bad news: **Torn Apart** has broken up. That's right, just off the heels of a new record on **Ferret** and this hardcore staple for the better part of the 90s is no more. I guess they were, um, Torn Apart. Damn, I'm so funny.... In other news, **Jade Tree** recently signed the band that comprises the other 3/5 of the late, great Lifetime. The band is called **Zero Zero**, and yes Ari is their singer. They're supposed to be much more rock than **Lifetime**. Let's hope they're half as good as Kid Dynamite.... **The National Acrobat** have broken up.... **Jimmy Eat World** recently headed into the studio with Mark Trombino at the helm to record a new record. No word on what label that will appear on. Born again independent rock band, you ask? Only time will tell.... **Fat Wreck** recently signed the **Dickies**, an old-school punk band best known for their cameo appearance in the movie *18 Again*. Perhaps George Burns will make a cameo appearance on their upcoming record.... **Cave-in** will be playing a series of shows with A Perfect Circle; **The Alkaline Trio** will be playing a few shows with Blink 182.... In case you hadn't heard, Sean McCabe, the lead singer of **Ink & Dagger** died a few months ago of a heroin overdose.... Has anyone else heard the rumor about **the Enkindels** breaking up? It's too bad 'cause Louisville is quickly running out of good punk bands.... In other break up news, the great **Silent Majority** has decided to call it quits. This one I'm actually really sad about. Is it me or are things just not going well for the state of **Initial's** roster?... Glam rock superstars **Less Than Jake** are going on tour with **Bon Jovi**. Maybe with a little luck Vinnie will start dating Pamela Lee.... Davey from **AFI** has a new side-project called **Son of Sam**. The band features members of **Danzig** and **Samhain**. I even hear Glenn Danzig himself will make a cameo appearance on the record.... **Hot Water Music** has signed to **Epitaph**. Who else would love to see **NOFX** and Gainesville's best on tour together?... In other signing news, my sources indicate that **Error!type:11** is going to a major. Right now it looks like Dreamworks will release the next full length from New York City's best would-be arena rock band.... I hear **Strike Anywhere** has signed to **Jade Tree**. Can anyone confirm that?... Apparently **Aspera** **Ad Aspera** will release their next record on **Big Wheel Recreation**.... **This Year's Model**, who just released an MCD on **Law of Inertia Records**, have upcoming splits with **Hot Rod Circuit** and **The New Amsterdams**.... One of the last good bands left on **Grand Royal**, Scotland's indie-dance superstars **Bis**, have signed to Lookout! I like Bis as much as the next guy but does anyone else find this weird for a traditionally punk label?... Does anyone else get the distinct impression that **Hopeless** and **Vagrant** are trying to corner the market on good old fashioned punk rock? I thought so. Anyways, **Hopeless** has signed Adam of **Atom and His Package**. Expect a new full length out in April.... In other news of British punk bands from way back when re-forming and signing to American indie labels, **The Damned** will be releasing their next record on **Nitro**. let's hope it doesn't sound like Nintendo music like some of their stuff from the '80s.... God told me that Starve-Hearted is the best band ever.... **The Jealous Sound** have left San Diego's **Better Looking Records** and have signed with Mojo. Can they be the next No Doubt? Only time will tell.... The best emo-core band you may never have heard of, **Thursday**, has left **EyeBall Records** and moved onto the greener pastures of **Victory Records**. Apparently Integrity isn't paying the bills anymore.... Just in case you missed it, **Spazz** and **25 Ta Life** both broke up recently. Oh yeah, they have a split 7" on **Edison** out now....Ex-Braid band, **Hey Mercedes**, not only relocated from Illinois to Milwaukee but that've left **Polyvinyl** and moved over to **Vagrant** (read above if you find this fishy).... **Equal Vision** is releasing the next CD by Boston's **American Nightmare**, featuring ex-members of **Ten Yard Fight**.... **Boy Set Fire** has moved on to bigger and better things, leaving **Victory** and settling in with **Wind-up Records**, also home to such hardcore luminaries as Creed and Stretch Princess.... Did anyone else th NY Times article on the best indie records of 2000? If so, you noticed that the new **Death Cab for Cutie** record got mad props from the biggest zine around.... Syracuse hardcore outfit, **Spark Lights the Friction**, has left **Hex Recordings** and has signed to **Trustkill**. Ex-Indecision band, **Most Precious Blood**, has also signed to Trustkill.... **Milemarker** has signed to **Jade Tree**. Is it me, or is Jade Tree easily the most hip label in the nation right now?... **Anti-Flag** has left **Go-Kart** and signed to **Fat Wreck**. What's up with all the political bands suddenly on Fat?

## Hot Rod Circuit / This Year's Model

### Split CD

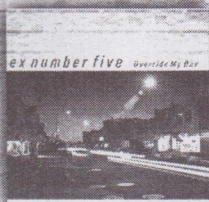
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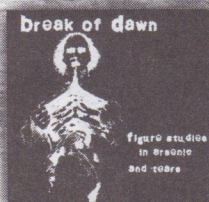
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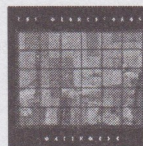
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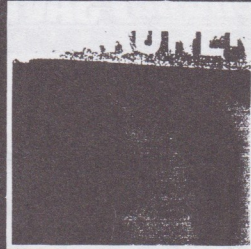
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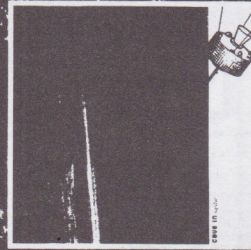
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# Label Pages

## Quannum Projects

**Web Page:** [www.quannum.com](http://www.quannum.com)

**Comments:** Some of you may be surprised to see this label in LOI considering we generally deal with hardcore, punk, etc. But, really we try to promote indie rock, plain and simple. Whatever form of indie rock we find appealing. Any-

ways, Quannum Projects is an artist run label that releases everything from electronic dance music to hip-hop to experimental turntablism. Not only are they one of the more up-and-coming label in the genres they cover, but they sure know how to design a site. This page is flash-loaded, informative, and interesting. The best part in my opinion, and this may be unusual, is the label's bio. Check this out and expand your mind.

**Key Selling Point:** Blackalicious may be the best hip-hop group in the world... ever... period.

**Best Releases to Date:** Anything by Blackalicious or DJ Shadow!

of useless electronic gadgets flooding the marketplace each year, it only makes sense that someone would come up with the idea to track all of the failure dot-com companies biting the dust these days. This site basically serves a which-company-is-fucked-today portal. It lets you vote for your (least) favorite tech companies that you think are, well, fucked. The best part is that the person who manages this site tried to sell the rights to it on e-bay. E-bay fucked him and took his auction off their server. So punch in the URL and cast your vote for who who will die first: Napster or MP3.com.

## Make-out Club

**Web Page:** [www.makeoutclub.com](http://www.makeoutclub.com)

**Comments:** This site is basically a dating service for indie rock and hardcore kids. The site (which is updated frequently), consists of profiles accompanied by pictures in both the "boys" and "girls" categories, a message board (sample topic: why didn't I kiss her goodnight), and even a few webcams. While there seem to be some genuinely cool kids on here, for the most part the profiles seem to become more of a "look how emo I am" competition. However, I must admit there are a lot of cute girls on here. Now how many of them I would email after reading just a few sentences about them (although there are links to web pages if applicable), still remains to be seen. At the least, this site is a great way to kill time and look at girls that would probably never talk to you (or at least to myself). Honestly, I didn't really check out the "boys" section too much, but it seemed like more of the same, with an abundance of high school straight-edge kids. From the looks of it, the webmaster is swamped with profiles and I'd been hearing gossip about this site for a while before I actually got around to checking it out (Hell, there was even a link from the Initial Records main page). Overall, this is a good way to bring together kids from across the country who have similar interests, but I could go without hearing about how every emo kids likes "stars." I don't think I would go onto this site searching for a date, but if you want to network with kids in the indie/punk rock genre who you would probably never otherwise meet it's a pretty cool idea. Free subscription to the first person to spot the Law of Inertia staff member's profile. Here's a hint, it's not me....

## Loser Racist Fuckers

**Web Page:** [www.stormfront.org](http://www.stormfront.org)

**Comments:** This is probably the last place one would expect to find a review of a blatantly racist site such as this. But, I really want people to see this site so they can realize that the web is not only inhabited by e-stores and pornography. Instead, we get people like the good folks at Storm Front who claim they do not hate anyone, but rather simply love their "white" race. They claim that "white" people are treated poorly in

America these days and that "white" people are looked down upon for being proud of their heritage. They say that teachers in public schools across the nation are required to be P.C. and forget that the "white" race has a past too. I'll tell you what your "white" past is also called: standard Western history. The best part-- yes, best part-- is the Storm Front Kids' page, run by some kid who looks like he's straight out of a 4th grade special-ed program. Please write to this kid and send him my regards (oh yeah, in case you don't know what my regards are, tell him he can shove his fucking foot up his fucking ass). Thank you very much.

# Videos

## Ten Yard Fight "The Only Way, A Video

**Documentary: 1995-1999** (*Bridge Nine Records*)- If prior to watching this documentary someone had asked me if a Ten Yard Fight documentary were necessary, I probably would have laughed and said it was about as necessary as the ill-fated Face to Face documentary. Thankfully (albeit slightly misleading) this documentary is less of TYF documentary and more of a video yearbook of Boston's straight-edge revival which took place from the mid to late 1990's. And while this revival spawned way too many bands imitating the already not-so-original old school sound, this video captures the emotion and honesty of that period in a fairly accurate, although a tad bit idealistic, manner (i.e. lack of fights, scene politics, shouting matches). While I see no point in glorifying the blatant violence of the scene, merely ignoring it tends to leave this video a little less accurate than it could have been. A majority of this video is dedicated to TYF's final show with co-conspirators Reach the Sky, Bane, In My Eyes, and Floorpunch. I knew that these bands were pretty huge in Boston, but I had no idea about the sheer number of kids who turned out for this show and how enthusiastic they were about this music. From the first stagedive to the silly string covered guitars during the final TYF song ever, this video captures the hardcore spirit in a way I haven't seen in quite a while. I also give props to TYF for ending the band (and simultaneously the old-school revival) before it got even more re-hashed than it had already become. If you were there, or would like to witness how hardcore music can bring people together, check this out. **JB**

# Misc.

## Heavy

**Web Page:** [www.heavy.com](http://www.heavy.com)

**Comments:** I'm not quite sure how I stumbled across this site but the fact is that I did and that I'll be coming back for seconds and thirds. Heavy is probably most famous for the hilarious parody they did of Metallica during the band's embarrassing dealings with Napster. Now, they've moved on to a fancy web site with all the flash and shockwave gimmicks to boot. Last time I checked, Heavy featured a bunch of computer generated cartoons on everything from homies to rockstars, and they're funny... really funny. I have no idea how the website makes money out of this whole thing, but sites like this actually make the web cool and interesting again. For once,

some one trying to purely entertain me without trying to shove product after product down my throat. So, strap on a DSL connection and surf on over to Heavy and prepare to have a new home on the web.

## Fucked Company

**Web Page:** [www.fuckedcompany.com](http://www.fuckedcompany.com)

**Comments:** With the world becoming increasingly digitized, and thousands upon thousands

Hardwired by Ross and Jonah







the tour- which is what we did.

**What's the story behind the new "Forgotten Love" EP?**

**Chris:** The new EP is basically a grab bag of recordings. There are two new songs that we all liked but weren't necessarily going to fit into an album format. The third song "Song for Kelly Huckaby" is a song that has been floating around for years that we just recorded in January. We did that in a studio in Tacoma, and also included two alternate tracks from the last record.

**Why did you feel the first two songs wouldn't fit on the new record? Is there a common theme to the newer material?**

**Ben:** Basically, we needed a home for these other two songs that had been floating around for a while, actually three by January. We considered putting them out as seven inches but we decided that we just wanted to clear them out on this EP and start fresh, and have a whole new batch of songs after the record comes out. That way, when we start working on new stuff it will be fresher than having these old songs which have been floating around for a year and a half.

**The song "Lowell, Massachusetts," (on "We Have the Facts and We're Voting Yes") was that a reference to Jack Kerouac's hometown?**

**Ben:** Yeah, I wrote the song about a Kerouac type character, if not Kerouac himself. I decided I would make it obvious for people who are "in the know" about stuff like that.

**Do you consider Kerouac to be an important influence on your songwriting?**

**Ben:** I came across Kerouac at a point in my life where it really hit me hard. It was my sophomore year in college, and I didn't know what I really wanted to do with myself. Getting swept up in the romanticism of his writing was really powerful at the time and even today I still really admire him, so I decided I would write a song about him.

**Do you feel your writing is inspired more**

**by authors or songwriters, or both?**

**Ben:** I think it's a combination of both. Growing up I was and still am a huge Blake Schwarzenbach fan. Jawbreaker was a band that I really fell in love with around "24 Hour Revenge Therapy" time. I've always really liked his writing a lot. I'm a huge fan of Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Kerouac, and people like Lou Reed. It's a combination of different types of people, I think more rock lyricists than literary type people. I wouldn't rattle off a whole list of obscure writers and "that's where I get my inspiration from," it's kind of a hodge-podge of both.

**How does the songwriting process work for you guys? Who does what?**

**Ben:** I'm the primary songwriter. I'll bring in demos for the group, and sometimes things stay the way they are and other times the other guys will come up with ideas that get built into the songs and we kind of work it out.

**When you come in with an idea do you have it already how you want it to sound stuck in your head?**

**Ben:** Usually all I have to go off are four-track demos. When I bring something to practice, usually they're on my crappy drum machine with poor recording quality so it's really exciting to bring something in and see how it turns out in the long run. I've never been really disappointed. When I've brought a song in and we've worked it out, I've never not liked it. So I like to leave it open just because it's gonna change when you bring it into a full band situation. So there is no point in holding on to an ideal way of how you think it should sound, especially if you just did it on a four-track.

**So do you have a four-track ready at all times and when you get an idea you put it down and listen to everything later?**

**Ben:** Yeah, I usually just goof around. Just write guitar parts and then maybe put choruses together, form rough structures of songs, and then work on melodies, and from there write lyrics. I don't write songs by hearing something in my head and going and working it out. It's usually just goofing around on a guitar.

**I had never heard of Barsuk Records prior to your band. Why did you decide to go with them?**

**Ben:** They are a small label, but I think that one thing that our experience with Barsuk has taught is that if there's an interest in your band and people at the label work to keep the record in stores, the label that you're on isn't as important as people think it is. I think we've all realized after a couple of years being on Barsuk and having some brief courtings with other labels, that we're in a really good situation.

**Have you had any major labels approach you lately?**

**Chris:** Not lately. I think they're finally starting to get the idea.

**Nick:** They were pretty on it for a while...

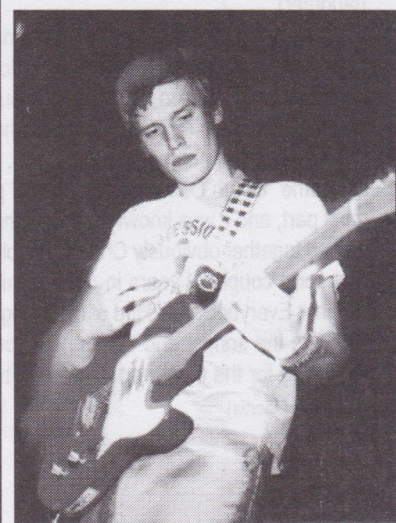
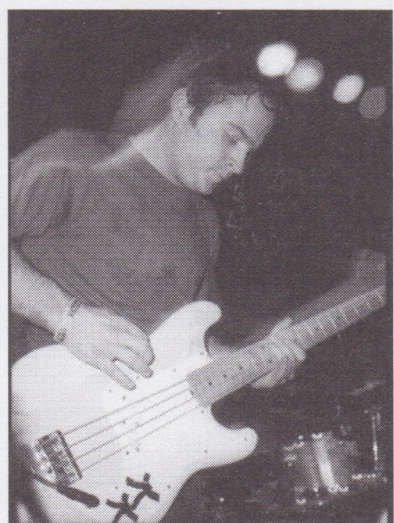
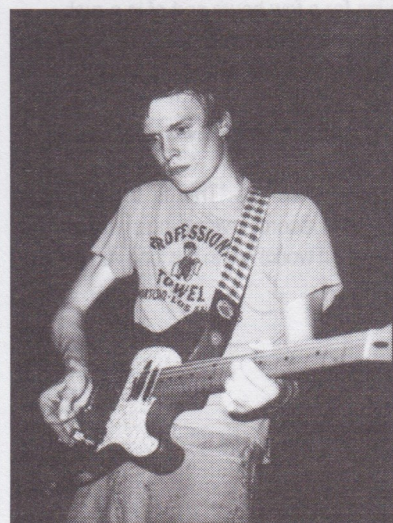
**Ben:** When the first record came out people were trying to figure out what kind of band we were and which direction we were going to take. There were a couple of courtings, but it never made sense. On paper it was always, "Why would we do this? This is not a good idea." I'm not saying major labels are inherently evil...

**Chris:** But they are! (laughter)

**Ben:** There's no reason for a band like us to go to a major-label. Other than just ruining everything we've worked for until this point.

**So the band originally formed in Bellingham, Washington- isn't that an odd place to be playing this type of music?**

**Ben:** Yeah we started playing in Bellingham because it is the town that we were going to school in with our first drummer Nathan. It was just known that after we graduated from school we were going to move to Seattle because while Bellingham is a great town, it's like any other college town- you can only be there for a finite amount of time. For a year of your life it's the greatest place in the world but when people





start graduating and leaving you become a "townie." So I think we wanted to avoid getting to that kind of area of celebrity, we didn't want to be the "townie celebrities." Michael lives in Portland, so we would do the commute for practice and shows.

**How do you think the Seattle scene has changed since the grunge-era of the early 90's? Has that affected you at all?**

**Ben:** Not really. There's no real cohesive scene in Seattle. There are a couple larger labels, like Up and Sub-Pop have their bands but....

**Nick:** More of the scene that I've seen isn't necessarily the musical delineation, like "the punk scene in Seattle." It's more that there are bands that have similar ethics and approaches to how they want to make their music and we all know each other and get along great, like Botch (see issue #8). You would never think of our two bands being in the same scene since they are a hardcore band. But in terms of ethics in Seattle there are bands like Juno, Pedro the Lion and Botch and these bands that all share a similar ethical stance on music and how it should be made. So that's more of the level of community in Seattle more than any sound way or fashion way.

**Ben:** I think that scenes in general are created by the media and people who want to try to shroud what's going on and make it seem like everybody is fighting the same fight. Even scenes like Chapel Hill, from the outside it seems like everybody plays shows together and it's this great thing but it's like anywhere else. People have their friends; whether or not geography forms or molds how people make music is kind of up for debate.

**I know you guys get asked about your name all the time. But I wanted to know if you ever get mistaken for being a heavier band since the word "death" is in your name and/or the best butchering of your name.**

**Chris:** We get lots of misprints in magazines and flyers, like the occasional "Death Camp for Cutie."

**Nick:** I've seen "Depth Lab"

**Chris:** All kinds of weird stuff. "The Death Cabs for Cuties." I don't know. Sometimes people do mistake it but for every time people mistake it, there's always one or two people who know where the name came from and honestly that's how we've met some of our best friends. That's really kind of neat when someone gets the joke.

**What exactly is the joke? [I see my chances of becoming one of Death Cab's best friends quickly fading....]**

**Ben:** Well actually it's not really a joke. There was a band called the "Bon-la-doo-da band" mid-sixties they were art school kids a couple of them went on to be in the Monty Python troupe. Paul McCartney saw them somewhere at some point or another about the time Magical Mystery Tour book and movie were about to be made and asked them to play in one of the live scenes in the film. It's the scene where John and Paul are sitting in sort of a sleazy bar and they're watching "Bon-la-da-doo-da band," and they're playing a song called "Death Cab for Cutie."

**Whose idea was the name and how did you all end up playing under the name Death Cab for Cutie?**

**Chris:** That was Ben's idea I don't want to have anything to do with that. (laughter)

**Ben:** I was in another band at the time and there were a couple songs I had floating around that I was going to call by a different name. Because my other band was on hiatus for the summer and I always thought if I had another band I would want that to be the name. It wasn't a unanimous type of thing-the name came with the band. Chris recorded the first tape under the name "Death Cab for Cutie," and I played all of the instruments for the most part, and it was known that was the name. When the time came to put a band together obviously Chris was going to be in the band, and I lived with Nick for a couple of years in college, and he played bass, and Chris knew Nathan. Everybody just kind of came together. It was like: "Here is the name, here are the songs, and this is how you play them." It was a very smooth beginning for the most part. It was probably the least awkward experience

playing music that I'd ever had. We'd play the song for the first time and it would sound great. There was definitely an energy there that I hadn't had with any other band.

**The production really stands out on both records, which were both produced by you, Chris. Do you have any background in production?**

**Chris:** Not really. I did a couple years worth of classes at community college and that was about it. I actually failed the classes I took in college. (laughter) I had the chance to do some hands on stuff and figure out what I liked and didn't like. It's just been trial by fire since then.

**Is mixing and recording stressful for a band like yourselves?**

**Nick:** This guy (pointing to Chris) is horrendous, he makes it unbelievably stressful. He's at our throats saying "you suck, you need to get better." (laughter). No it's the most laid back thing in the world, and maybe at times to our detriment. Chris is on it and stays on it and just goes for it. I recorded in a band before I was in Death Cab and it was the worst experience of my life. I went insane with two other people that just drove ourselves into the ground in the middle of nowhere making a record we thought. So compared to any other recording experience I've had it's awesome. It's like hanging out in a clubhouse.

**Ben:** Whatever Chris has wanted to do with recording stuff I've always been like yeah, go for it. Because Chris' quality control is good enough that if something doesn't sound like it's going to work out he'll pull the plug on it. It's always like "whatever you want to do, go for it," and I know it's going to sound good so there's no point not trying it. Chris could say "I want you to stand out in the yard naked and do your vocals", which hasn't happened... yet, "Because I want that emotion out of you." It's like "sure let's do it." And then it's like "oh it didn't work out because kids were laughing at me the whole time and it got blood on the mic" (laughter). No, it's fun, we get at each others throats every once in a while because it is a stressful thing to go under, especially if it's like long hours of Chris sitting behind a board all day long and playing on the record. He doesn't get to go out and get a beer; he's behind the board all day long. So for him it's a lot more difficult than it is for any of us.

**Nick:** Getting at each other's throats in our band is like "I need to get out of here for a while." And then someone leaves for a few hours sort of in a rush.

**Ben:** It's not like the Robinson brothers in the Black Crowes, getting in fistfights and quitting the band! (laughter.)

**Nick:** It's never been an explosive, "are we still a band?" Type thing.

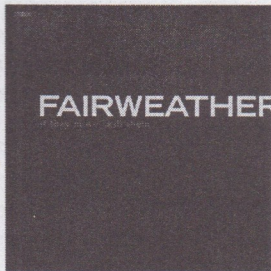
**Ben:** Just to clarify, it's not "This is the greatest thing recording this record, everything's wonderful. We record so well." It works out in the long run but it's a difficult process.



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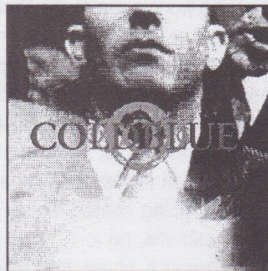
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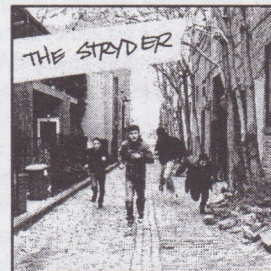
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# The Lifestyle of a Professional Gentleman of Leisure

by Jacob Futernick

One mild summer's day in Cambridge Massachusetts, 22 year old Aaron Young stepped into the windowless room at the Harvard University medical facility that would be his home for the next two weeks. In a study sponsored by NASA, he lived the life of the human guinea pig, riding an exercise bike 45 miles a day, sleeping with electrodes attached to his face, and lying at a 45° angle for 40 hours so researchers could find his body's "constant routine." Two cameras monitored him 24 hours a day, and according to Young, "every single move I made people were taking notes." While Aaron lost his summer tan in the lab, he left with a 3,000 dollar check for his troubles. Free from financial worries, a work-free summer lay ahead of him.

In contrast to people like Aaron, most Americans are workaholics. Obsessed with the latest Sport Utility Vehicle, DVD player, or Pentium processor, we now work over 47 hours a week, achieving the dubious distinction of working the most number of hours in the world, almost nine weeks more than the typical European. With the proliferation of beepers, cell phones, palm pilots, and laptops, work now follows people to an afternoon ballgame or a pool-side vacation thousands of miles from their office.

Yet in this brave new dot-economy, there are those who wish to pull off the Information Superhighway in favor of analog country roads: the Professional Gentleman of Leisure. A guru so to speak for the aspiring Gentleman of Leisure, San Francisco native Noel Shankel defines himself as "someone who could take a five day nap, awaken, and have everything be just about the same. Any responsibility that I might have ditched either A, I didn't care about or B, had no impact on my life. A few friends would be like, 'Hey, where were you the past week?' 'Oh, taking a nap,'" He expands the definition to someone who never takes anything too seriously, keeps work to a minimum, and doesn't spend all of his free time wasting away in front of the TV, instead pursuing maximum levels of recreation and entertainment. A Professional Gentleman of Leisure is not to be confused with a run-of-the-mill slacker: freeloading entirely off unemployment, disability, lottery checks or your mom is unacceptable.

One of the paramount concerns to a Professional Gentleman of Leisure is sustaining oneself financially without crimping a laid-back lifestyle. Exceptions to this rule are sometimes necessary in order to fundraise for an upcoming trip, make a given month's rent, or pay for some unforeseen cost of living. These times are inevitable but they help "motivate you to overcome the square world so you won't have to spend a career there like the people in your office," says Wyatt Ossa, one of the originators of Professional Gentleman of Leisurehood, whose origins can be

traced back to pimp terminology.

Because of the need to work hard only sporadically, temp work is vital to the Professional Gentleman of Leisure. While temp jobs may consist of mind-numbing repetition of simple tasks and stressed out managers venting their contempt for the world on you, they can also involve doing very little to nothing for 14 dollars an hour. Temp jobs have been known to include working at a computer recycling center "where your job is literally to smash shit, no joke," said a former employee or "answer a phone that never rang" according to one temp veteran. In a pinch, other jobs that offer easy money include donating blood or sperm, the latter being a less painful, more pleasurable experience.

In addition to temp work, medical research offers a great way for the Professional Gentleman of Leisure to make some money. Hospitals, clinics, and medical centers will usually post studies looking for volunteers on bulletin boards, on the web, or in advertisements that appear in the back of alternative weekly newspapers. There are three basic kinds of studies, short questionnaires, live-in studies at a lab, and experimental drug trials. For those who are unfortunate enough to suffer from ailments such as herpes, chronic fatigue syndrome, or male pattern baldness, some of your pain can be alleviated (if not cured) by subjecting yourself to studies or experimental drugs. With these kinds of studies though, it is important to know what the possible risks are and whom to call if there are any problems.

Other, more low-key studies deal with sleep, diet, memory, smoking, etc.. and often offer you \$25-\$50 for a short amount of your time. One can actually get paid for having their "bacteria and fluoride levels in spit," measured, receiving, "minimum \$200 reimbursement (\$25 after each spit visit)."

The kind of studies found most appealing by a Professional Gentleman of Leisure involve living in a laboratory for a couple days to a couple weeks undergoing tests involving diet, exercise, sleep, altitude adjustment, and other areas deemed vital to the world of medical research. They pay fairly well and require an extremely flexible schedule only the un or semi-employed possess. "It was an experience I'll never forget and never do again," says Young of his stint with NASA, "but it was something you look back on and say, 'I went through that shit.' You also don't have to worry about work for a solid month or two."

Focus grouping, which for the uninformed means fitting the right demographic and receiving compensation for your opinion, is one of the best jobs out there for a Professional Gentleman of Leisure. The various market research

companies that create focus groups have a database of possible candidates. Having a friend who works at these companies can get you into groups, but if this luxury is unavailable, you must take advantage of the telemarketing style phone calls that form most focus groups. There are several techniques to handling a call, "the person doing the interview might be a Professional Gentleman of Leisure himself," says Noel Shankel, a focus grouping expert. "and they'll kind of guide you to the right answers." A typical conversation may proceed as follows:

"How many times a month do you eat fast food?"  
'Once a month I'd say.'

'Oh, you mean three times a week?'

'Yeah sure.'

If the operator isn't on your side from the start, figuring out their "angle" and making up the right answers is essential because, "Once you make it in the door, you're getting your money no matter what you do" says Shankel who advises to, "be sure and talk a lot, then the focus group people will like you and they'll think, 'Yeah, we kind of like that guy, maybe we should bring him back sometime.'"

Proving that you don't need to fit the right demographic or know anything about what you're talking about, only needing to convince other people that you do, Noel once got into a group for a web site called Garageband.com with two of his friends. "None of us really logged on too much, if ever," he said, "I myself not even owning the Internet." The session began with responses to various ads and then came time to huddle around a computer. The leader turned to Noel and told him, "Being the Internet junkie that you are, why don't you get on the computer and start downloading some music?" Totally confused (not to mention extremely high) Shankel turned to his companion and from the look on his face, it was obvious he was not going to be any help. Brian Chan, who owns a computer and met his girlfriend on the Internet seemed the best candidate. Within the first 10 to 15 seconds, he was no longer on the garageband.com website and moments later, the computer completely shut down. "After a ten minute break, some other dude is on the computer, we get our money, head out to a bar and celebrate," said Shankel.

For the Professional Gentleman of Leisure, these kinds of jobs are not a fluke but rather common occurrences in one's career. James Squeaky, founder of MisterRidiculous.com, a webzine combining columns, record reviews, a personal journal, and general ridiculousness, once answered an ad in the back of a newspaper to be a telephone psychic. To get the job, his entire interview had nothing to do with skills or past experiences but instead revolved around the single question, "Are you sure you want to do



this?" Hired as an "independent contractor," meaning he was his own boss and had a special phone line hooked up so he could work at home, he was told to avoid swearing and sexual talk, but other than that he was free to conduct the "readings" however he found most effective.

Calls usually began with tarot cards readings and James, not knowing anything about tarot cards would "just flip some over and get ideas based on the pictures like 'I see a man with blonde hair in your future.'"

Almost all of the callers were women inquiring about their love life, asking if their boyfriends still loved them or if they will ever meet someone. "I told women that their men were cheating on them," says Squeaky, "and even told one lady that her husband had gotten someone else pregnant. I was fairly ruthless a lot of the time though I tried to be sweet in my delivery."

As a telephone psychic, one must possess the ability to deal with those sometimes referred to as "unbalanced." James once fielded a call from a girl asking if her mother "was really going to marry Jesus Christ?" When he told her it was a distinct possibility, the mother, "drunk as a loon" grabbed the phone and rambled on for 15 minutes, finally informing him that Christ was going to return to Earth and take her as his bride. Finally she asked, "Am I paying for this call?" and then went on a little while longer while James collected a commission for each minute she babbled on.

One step down from the premiere level jobs exists a grey area in the career of a Professional Gentleman of Leisure of jobs that are not very good, but become worthwhile with the intent of getting spectacularly fired in the end. Infiltrating corporate retailers like The Gap, Starbucks, or Hollywood Video and attempting to become the worst employee in company history will make a sucky job sufficiently fun. Working a mall or amusement park dressed up as Goofy, Santa Claus, or any character from Star Wars drunk as hell can provide for comedic situations. Vending candy at concerts offers the opportunity to mix essential ingredients of risky entertainment, possible excommunication at any moment while at the same time making money. As a vender, you can barter candy for other services including the attention of pretty girls, alcohol, marijuana, or the opportunity to con security into thinking you're part of the act and get on stage (or get thrown out in the process).

In addition to having the correct mentality and the right job, a Professional Gentleman of Leisure must properly occupy his free time. Because one's schedule is less constricting than the average working man, afternoon barbecues, road trips on a whim, touring with a band, or acting in a friend's movie become an everyday possibility. In your down time, making fake documentaries, recording your prank calls, and writing pointless angry letters

to companies about defective products (real or imagined) offer endless entertainment.

These elements can be combined into a cable access TV show. Producing a show can be a relaxing and/or exhausting process depending on your approach. Larry Comeau from The Backyard, thinks "everyone should have a TV show," but warns, "If you are going to do a public access show, do a shitty one so you won't have to waste time getting good." On the other end of the spectrum is Garrett Gilchrist of Dr. Fred's Amazing Exploding Cow Show who thinks producing a cable access TV show is, "tough, unending work, especially the editing... Making Dr. Fred has been pure pain, but an enjoyable sort of pain that you can stupidly forget afterwards and start over anew." The difference in philosophy from those who create skits of Captain Canuck, a Canadian crime fighter and those who create a 2 hour personal opus parodying Star Wars, The Phantom Menace illustrate this dichotomy.

For those doubting their ability to put on a show, look at Nick Freeman of The Donkey Show, based out of San Diego and named after a Tijuana donkey sex show. The show features a couple dudes sitting on a couch, taking calls, and making skits based on concepts like "the Disco Pirate Detectives." He says, "There's this misconception that getting a TV show is really a difficult process." He got his show simply by showing up at his campus TV station and telling the people there he wanted a time slot.

A vital skill to any Professional Gentleman of Leisure is the ability to bullshit one's way into (and out of) any predicament. Skills may be tested by crashing office parties and hotel conventions. A typical plan of action in attending an office party (hopefully a dot-com where most people are young, trying their hardest to be cool and therefore easily mocked) is to go in less than sober, take full advantage of free food and drinks, pay no attention to what people think of you, and keep a sharp lookout for any possible comedy. This may come from the lone wasted guy manning the keg, permission from an employee to do something stupid like pilot chairs through a cubicle race track, or cutting up the dance floor like a drunk monkey.

Perhaps the most fun in crashing an office party comes from the art of the patronizing conversation. The goal when chatting up an employee is to keep them barely unaware you are being sarcastic and make sure everyone else around knows what you're doing. Make sustained eye contact, smile, give an exaggeratedly enthusiastic tone to your voice and most working stiffs should be putty in your hands.

When it comes to attending conventions, 22 year old Christian Cappozzoli is a veteran of the trade. Proper dress is a must and Cappozzoli often brings a backpack with different types of clothes but he typically relies on his "one nice Bar Mitzvah type

suit, khakis and a blazer." He advises one to show up fashionably late, grab a name tag, and never act like you're sneaking in; making friends with people in the lobby and accompanying them in is a useful strategy.

In becoming a skilled convention crasher, Cappozzoli has often had to learn from his mistakes. He once attended an event at Hynes Convention Center in Boston with no knowledge of what it was about, an easy way to set yourself up for disaster. He arrived early (another faux pas) and started to mingle among the crowd until he was approached by security. "At first I didn't realize why they were asking me to leave once the room started filling up and I'd already sat down at a table to eat. I was actually escorted out of the building and told never to come back." Except for himself, the entire room was full of nothing but Asian men.

He attended another function, this time a writers conference at the Westin, and after a free meal, he decided to join everyone else staying at the hotel on a visit to the swimming pool. He went into the bathroom to put on his swimsuit, which he had packed because "my whole intention of going was because they had a pool and it was the middle of February." After swimming for a while, it came time to exit and as he left the fitness center he was asked by one of the staff members patrolling the area, "Um, are you staying here at the hotel." He ended up being asked to leave and unable to retrieve his clothes which he had stashed in a fire extinguisher box, forcing him to take the T home in the middle of winter, still wearing his damp bathing suit. This is a small price to pay for the prodigal amounts of free food and hospitality he (and anyone else with the desire to do so) has taken advantage of.

For any competitive desires a Professional Gentleman of Leisure might possess, sports such as wiffle ball, frisbee golf, or Ping-Pong are well suited as they can be played among friends, or at sanctioned tournaments where a Professional Gentleman of Leisure is almost guaranteed to run into his own kind. Pointless contests such as a Burrito Eating Challenge or "The Drinking Olympics" can bring entertainment and debauchery into an otherwise typical evening. During his freshmen year of college, Shankel participated in a 40 drinking contest he still remembers fondly to this day. "I was mislead into believing if I ate nothing but bread and butter for a week, I could drink as much as I wanted without getting sick." After one 40 in the first hour, another in the next half hour, and a couple sips of his third, he found himself face-first on the ground in front of the toilet, professing his love to the girl wiping his vomit off the toilet bowl.

No one ever said the life of a Professional Gentleman of Leisure was going to be easy or glamorous. Just a whole hell of a lot of fun.



### Ross Siegel's Top Ten Alternate Names for Law of Inertia

- 10) Muddle
- 9) Lethal Bakesale
- 8) Niels Bohr's Theories on Quantum Physics
- 7) # 100346783-R4H
- 6) Nation of Coalitions
- 5) Keenan and Kal's Need to Break Stuff
- 4) Barely Legal
- 3) Rich Kids on LSD
- 2) Punk and Poor Quarterly
- 1) Maximum Ross and Roll

### Jonah Bayer's Top Ten Failed Slogans for Law of Inertia

- 10) Putting the "z" in zine
- 9) It feels so Right to be so Wrong
- 8) If you don't like our magazine, you can make it into a cool hat
- 7) 'Cause everyone runs out of toilet paper eventually.
- 6) Putting the "hip" in hip-hop
- 5) David Duke for President
- 4) Even funnier than Goodburger
- 3) No glove, no love
- 2) Move over Simba, there's a new king of the jungle
- 1) Keanu Reeves, eat your heart out

### Dan Patton's Top Ten Things I'd Rather do than Listen to a Scott Vogel Band

- 10) Convince someone straight edge is cool by citing Floorpunch
- 9) Watch a Mama's Family marathon
- 8) Identify with Juliana Theory lyrics
- 7) Wear a hat sideways
- 6) See New Found Glory "make it"
- 5) Wear FUBU gear
- 4) Recognize Kurt Russell as my biological father
- 3) Choreograph a Juliana Theory set for singer Brett
- 2) Listen to Anti-Flag give their "two cents"
- 1) Convince Youth Brigade not to call it quits

### Dan Frantic's Top Ten Dishes Inspired by the Music of Lou Reed & The Velvet Underground

- 10) Heroin
- 9) All Tomorrow's Patties
- 8) Perfect Whey
- 7) Bun Bun Bun
- 6) The Black Angel's Death Burger
- 5) New Pork Telephone Conversation
- 4) Candied Warhol
- 3) Waiting for my Ham
- 2) White Light/White Meat
- 1) Bananas 'n' Nico

### Top Ten things that give Tim Holden a boner.

- 10) Getting the chicken or corn out from in between my teeth after an afternoon of trying.
- 9) EEE width shoes.
- 8) Old Bay flavored potato chips
- 7) The smell of low tide.
- 6) Street fairs with a fried dough stand. (Fried dough alone does not give me a boner, but the aura that that stand provides does).
- 5) Drinking the milk after eating a bowl of Crunchberry or Fruity Pebbles cereal.
- 4) Finding a new state quarter.
- 3) Singing along to the original "Crimson and Clover" on the car radio.
- 2) Bare feet on wet grass.
- 1) Lobster Rolls (But not the ones from McDonald's).

### Dean Proserpio's Boring Old Top Ten List

- 10) Western Massachusetts
- 9) moving on
- 8) "making banks collapse"
- 7) meeting people in trainyards
- 6) heavy metal record guides
- 5) the massive snowstorm on New Year's weekend hit the WHOLE north-east except Boston.
- 4) record stores letting me into their basements
- 3) fucking cheap DVDs
- 2) the first thing on the new Wu album is the theme to Channel 5's Saturday Afternoon Drive-In movie
- 1) the return of Details

### Pablo Alcala-Roman's Top Ten Reasons He Would Kill Himself

- 10) John Denver boxset re-releases. 'Nuff said.
- 9) The Delia's catalog going way downhill. Didn't those girls used to be cute? Or, am I just getting too old to notice that they still are?
- 8) My medication making me either want to take a shit or puke
- 7) "Billy Elliot": the worst movie ever?
- 6) The Bay Area's ample supply of bridges
- 5) hot dogs: why would anyone want to eat such a foul conglomeration of meat?
- 4) people who act old in every sense of the word
- 3) good alcohol being so damn expensive and opting for more Bjork paraphernalia instead.
- 2) Living with mom
- 1) Girls Girls Girls

### Nick Powers' Top Ten Reasons He Wants to Move to England

- 10) The accent makes more colorful curse words, like "bloody twat", much less offensive.
- 9) Stronger sense of national humility.
- 8) All the good bands have fan-friendly, easy-to-remember names, like Blur and Pulp.
- 7) I think I have some distant English cousins who are hot.
- 6) They know how to run a bloody election.
- 5) Words and phrases like "quid", "scupper", and "cheeky git".
- 4) Scooter means Vespa and not Razor.
- 3) Their boy bands are much more rock'n'roll, with alcoholic members who get kicked out and come back to write good songs of loathing self-mockery, a la Robbie Williams.
- 2) Much much less enviro-guilt.
- 1) David Beckham isn't such a wanker anymore.

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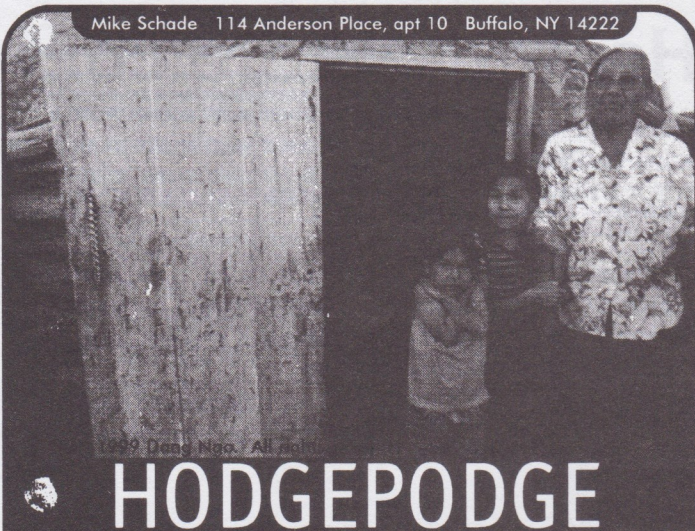
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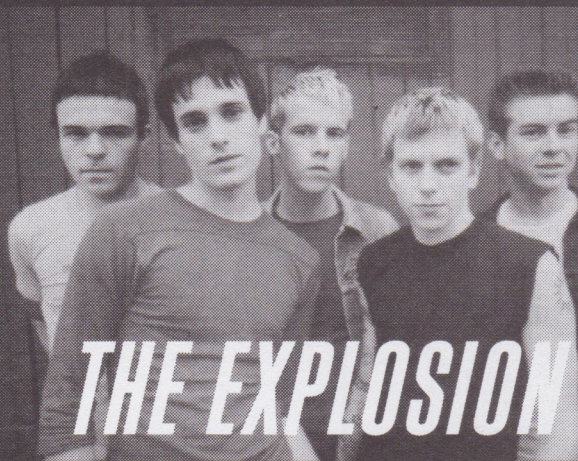
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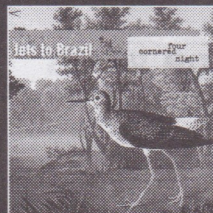
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# Drowningman

by Ross



Drowningman are here to kick some ass, no bones about it. They rock the house and are happy to provide a soundtrack to your battle royal-- or so I thought before I sat down with singer, Simon Brody, at CMJ this year. As it turns out, Drowningman, one of the most intense and heavy bands you will ever hear, are not interested in kicking ass at all. Instead, they're about having fun and playing a musical style they love. This was easily one of the most fun, and best, interviews I've ever done. I hope you agree.

**So, you guys just got off tour with Earth Crisis and the Glassjaw?**

Um yeah, the first half of the tour was with the Earth Crisis headlining and the second half had the Glassjaw headlining and Shadows Fall and us. Earth Crisis wasn't on the second half.

**How did it go?**

It was tour. It was what we've come to expect from tour. Some nights were awesome. Some nights were the some of the most incredible shows we've ever played and others sucked shit.

**The Glassjaw and Earth Crisis fans I would imagine aren't really your speed.**

Not entirely, but there was some crossover, especially from the Glassjaw crowd. The Glassjaw kids tended to be much more accepting of us. I mean, a lot of Earth Crisis fans were into us too. Where we did the best were cities where we played on the Dillinger Escape Plan tour a while back. Those same kids came to see us on this tour.

**Well, you guys come from the Hydra Head camp and that label's type of hardcore tends to be pretty intelligent as far as aggressive music is concerned.**

Yeah, I would definitely agree. I'm sure you're going to ask the question that everyone asks about why we left Hydra Head.

**Actually I wasn't. I don't really care.**

Good.

**Do you want me to ask that?**

No, actually what I was going to say is that I wish kids would stop asking us that stupid fucking question. (laughter)

**No, I like to ask better questions.**

Cool, I just had to get that out of the way. Anyways, when we had that record out on Hydra Head that was right when Hydra Head was starting to get big. There seemed to be a certain amount of kids that would pick it up simply because they knew Hydra Head's reputation. A lot of people checked us out in that way not knowing anything about us, just that since we

were on Hydra Head we probably had the Hydra Head sound.

**Yeah, but on Revelation they've got bands that range from Kill Holiday to In My Eyes, so you really never know what you're gonna get there.**

Yes, and I think I'm really more into the current catalog of our old label than I am our new label. Revelation put out some of my favorite records a long time ago. And, actually lately they've really been improving in quality.

**Time in Malta is one of my favorite bands in the world and their stuff isn't much different from you guys.**

So you know that they're going to be on Revelation as well now. I think that's kind of a cool thing. When Rev put out our EP, I don't think they expected it to do as well as it did, so when they have a band that's doing well they try to promote it a little bit more. I hope because of us they started to look around and check out stuff that may be a bit more like us.

I'm psyched to be on the same label as Time in Malta.

**Simon, how do they light cigarettes in prison? (laughter) Has anyone ever asked you that before?**

Oh yeah, well we named our EP that because of a story a friend of mine told us. He had just gotten out of prison for like a month and it was kind of funny 'cause he came out of jail so much tougher than he already was.

He was a tough kid to begin with. Anyways, he told us a bunch of stories and one of them was the cigarette story. You see, they're not allowed to have lighters in prison so they take the twisty-ties from bread and garbage bags and break them into three pieces after they take the plastic off. They take two pieces and put each one into each part of the socket and then take the third one and drop it over the top of the other two. So it creates an arc and a flame. They smuggle cigarettes into prison and smoke them that way.

**Well, I just read an article in the NY Times and it said that in the Suffolk County jail here in NY, one cigarette can cost as much as \$15 on the black market.**

He didn't really tell us anything about costs of the cigarettes. But I wouldn't be surprised.

**So why did you name the EP that? Did it have some significance for the band or was it just a cool title?**

Well, I was sending an e-mail to a friend and I told him the whole story. So, a few days later we wrote the song with the



same name and just used that one. We basically take the coolest song name and use it for the album title.

**You guys aren't the type of band that simply must use inside jokes whenever possible?**

Are you kidding? Our whole band is one big inside joke. (laughter) Drowningman is a joke that only we get.

**Tell me an inside joke that only the guys in Drowningman would get.**

Oh my god, anyone that sees us live knows that we're really into jokes. Everyone in the band will know about something that happened to someone in the band, and I'll get in trouble when I talk about it up on stage. Like tonight, I told the crowd about Matt's terrible self-inflicted hair cut. One of the best ones on tour was the night when Matt Roy drank too much and went to sleep on the bed next to me with his pants on, and when he woke up in the morning he was completely naked under a sheet on the floor. (laughter) We have no idea how it happened.

**Okay, let's talk about the biggest inside joke of them all. You guys have this violence thing going on with your band. Case in point: that promo picture with you beating the shit out of your drummer with pipes; your new record "Rock and Roll Killing Machine" with bloody teeth in the layout; the lyrics; and the name of the band. What's up with this?**

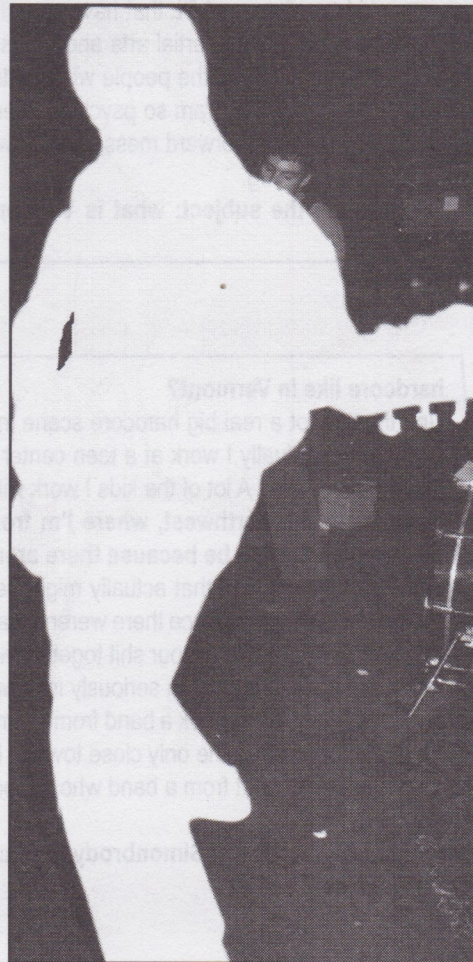
Drowningman the name is from a U2 title. I love U2. I'm starting to like their new stuff too, especially their new song. The promo picture was the idea of this crazy friend that I went to high school with who once attacked me with a dead cat.

**Tell that story really quick 'cause I'm sure everyone would like to know about that.**

Well, he attacked me with a dead cat. (laughter) His family had a lot of cats and one of them died. I went over to his house after school and he jumped out from around the corner and started hitting me with the cat.

**That is the most fucked up thing I have ever heard.**

Yeah, it's pretty fucked up. The cat was stiff. (we both burst into laughter)



**Did it hurt?**

A little bit. Yeah that was fucked up. So he showed up and he's an awesome photographer, but I think he took everything I sing about really literally. So he was like let's do this and let's do that, and one of his ideas was to beat the shit of our drummer with lead pipes while our drummer is tied up. It's a great picture, but I think it may be over done.

**I'm just worried that if you send it to some big magazines that people there are going to be like, "fuck, what the hell is wrong with these guys?" I thought it looked awesome, though.**

We have a new picture with us just sitting around a table. It's boring, but it still looks cool. As for the record title and the lyrics it's sort of a tongue-in-cheek, self-parody of the kind of music that we play.

**What do you mean?**

Well, our music—we think—is very emotional music. Not emotional in the type that makes you want to sway back and forth or kiss your girlfriend or something. Instead, hardcore and our music tends to bring out violent emotions in people. So, we're trying to play it up and make it sort of into a joke. It's the kind of thing that a person would expect a band playing this type of music to talk about.

**Like, "we're doing it, while everyone else is just talking about it."**

Yeah, and to a certain extent everyone has these thoughts. Some times when you're on stage it's funny to scream and look like you're ready to fight. Some nights you partially mean it. Sometimes you're pissed and music is the best way to let off some steam, so you don't go off and want to fight with people.

**When you're up there on stage, what do you think about?**

I think about if my hair looks good...

**Are you joking?**

No. (laughter) I'm wondering if I did enough sit-ups that week, if my underwear is showing. Sometimes I wonder if I'm going to hit a kid in the head with the mic but not very often.

**From seeing your promo pictures you would expect that you wouldn't give a shit about hitting the kid in the head.**

I do. I definitely do. It's funny because on the past tour a lot of times we'd play after the local openers, and I'd wondered if there are kids out there who are taking this shit seriously. I actually had a conversation with Karl from Earth Crisis, and obviously that band wants kids to take their lyrics very seriously. With us a lot of our stuff is joking and he asked me if kids were smart enough to understand that.

**You could say that about his music much more easily, though.**

In hardcore everything you say is always misconstrued. It's just how it works in the communication part. Every band I know of that is worth their salt has had something they said in a neutral way come back to them in a negative way.

**When you're up there on stage and you're worrying whether or not your underwear is showing, do you ever think, "fuck man, I had a shitty week I want to kill someone"?**

Yeah, and those tend to be our worst shows. Of course, I'm kind of joking about the underwear/hair thing, but there's definitely moments where I'm not thinking about the music as much as how I look. Tonight was a good example of a night where I'm having a really fucking good time.



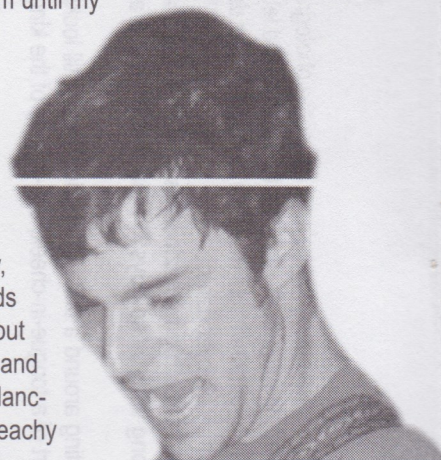
When I know that a lot of the stuff is tongue-in-cheek and fun and that the kids are in on the joke with us. But there are those few nights—that usually are bad for us—where I'm screaming to let off steam. You can tell I'm a pretty passive guy, but everyone has their moments. It's human. Perhaps that's why I bother to get up there and scream until my throat hurts in the first place: so I won't have to feel like shit and then want to fight.

**Just coming from an objective viewpoint, I'm a pacifist. I don't fight under any circumstances.**

Neither do I.

**I'm sure you don't, but when I listened to your music tonight, I just want to throw some fucking kid across the room.**

Yeah, there is that element. I know the music brings that out in people. We're kind of taking a jab at that side of hardcore. Our music is not a soundtrack for people to beat the shit out of each other too. I like it when kids have fun and dance and go off, and it bums me out when there are fights, but sometimes our music is a way, I hope, for kids to deal with their aggression. I hope people are picking up on that vibe. I mean, so many bands in hardcore talk about how violence is wrong and stuff, but what they forget is that this music we play brings out violent tendencies in people. I totally recognize that the kids from who come to see us may want to kick-box and mosh to burn off steam, and that's the same reason I play music. But, I would so much rather kids realize that dancing to aggressive music and taking your anger out that way is so much better than fighting. I think a lot of preachy hardcore bands tend to forget that heavy music creates too much testosterone, and too much testosterone



can lead to violence. I try—and whether I'm successful or not is another story—to look those violent tendencies in the face and turn it into creativity and plain old fun.

**Well said.**

I may be expecting too much from the average listener, but those kids who get the message are the kids we're playing for.

**So answer Karl's question: are kids smart enough?**

I think a lot of them aren't. I think there is a good segment of kids in hardcore that do get it and as I said those are the kids that we're playing for. I've actually looked up some kids profiles on AOL that have e-mailed us. There are a few that are into collecting guns and martial arts and that scares the hell out of me. Then again the vast majority of the people who contact us do get us and we have intelligent conversations. I am so psyched when kids get our joke 'cause it's definitely not a straight-forward message. We would never take responsibility for what we're doing.

**Let me change the subject: what is Vermont like and what is**

**hardcore like in Vermont?**

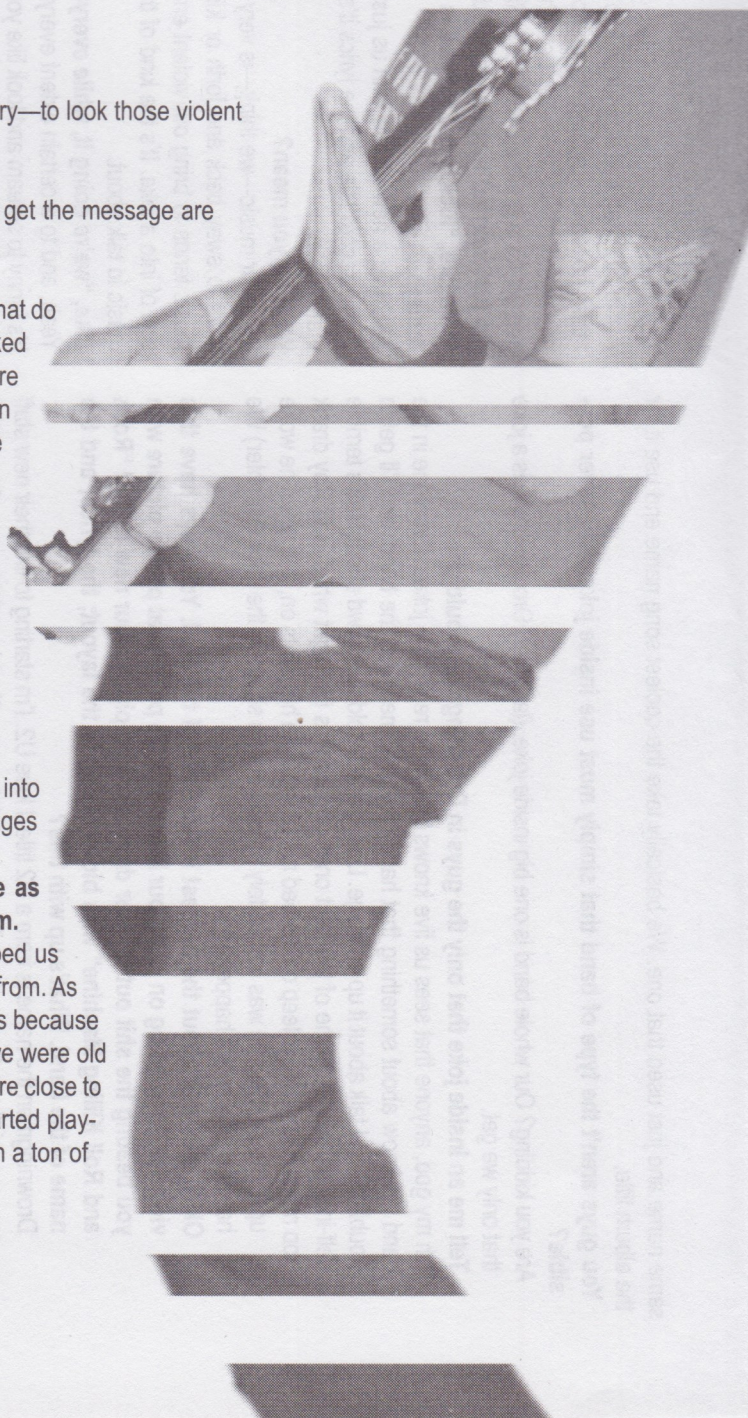
Um, there's not a real big hardcore scene in Vermont. A lot of people are into local bands. Actually I work at a teen center that is one of the bigger all-ages venues in Vermont. A lot of the kids I work with are into our band.

**Bands from the northwest, where I'm from, like Botch, will never be as huge as they should be because there aren't any big towns around them.**

Yeah, like Vermont. But that actually might be good for us. For one, it helped us develop our own sound since there weren't many other bands there to draw from. As far as going on tour we had our shit together when we finally went out. That's because it took us so long to get taken seriously in New England, that once we did we were old pros. No one is going to book a band from Vermont on a whim. (laughter) We're close to Boston, but that's really the only close town to Burlington. By the time we started playing out of town we went from a band who nobody had heard of to a band with a ton of interest.

**Simon can be reached at [Simonbrody@aol.com](mailto:Simonbrody@aol.com)**

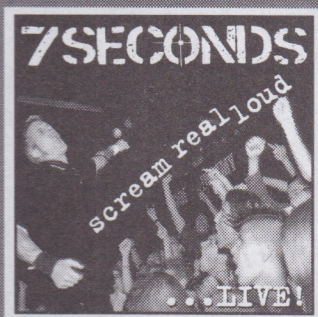
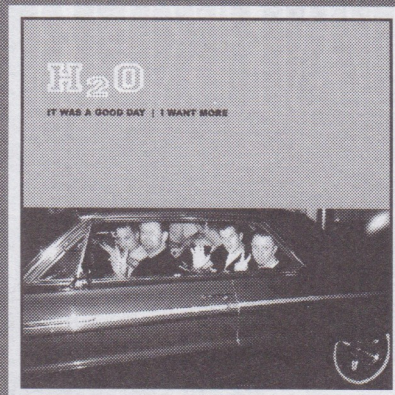
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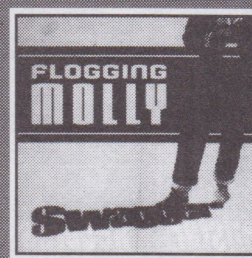
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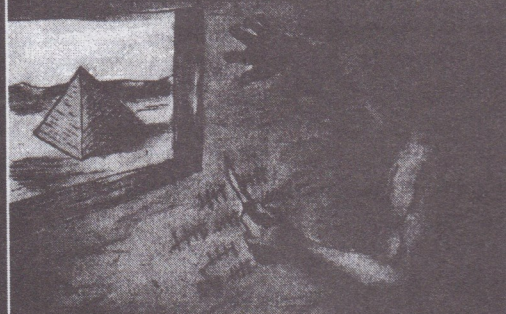
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NO SLEEP IN FORTY DAYS

DARKER DAY TOMORROW



NO SLEEP IN FORTY DAYS

DARKER DAY TOMORROW'S debut full-length CD will floor you. This Syracuse, New York powerhouse, made up of ex-members of Another Victim and Hermon Dekalb, will amaze you with their dynamic song structures. Combining hardcore, metal, and even a little rock n' roll, DARKER DAY TOMORROW is quickly becoming one of the hardcore scene's most talked about new bands. Their first release, a three song CD EP on Alone Records, earned the band great reviews in zines throughout North America and a short tour is already in the works for January of 2001. This nine song CD is a must-have for fans of Damnation AD, Cave-In, and Turmoil. Only \$10.00 postage-paid.

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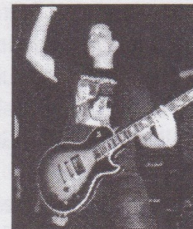
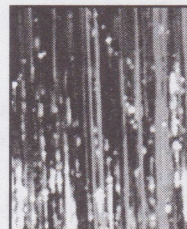
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## THE DILLINGER 4

INTERVIEW AND PHOTOS BY ROSS





# TOUGH <sup>d4.</sup>

The Dillinger 4 may just be the best band in the punk rock genre in the nation right now. Funny, energetic live shows, and straight-forward catchy pop-punk makes this band a keeper musically. But, it is their miscellaneous antics that are the real crowd-pleaser. I've wanted to interview them for a while now but I really didn't know what to ask. Should I question them on their label? Nah, boring. Should I talk about the Midwest, where they're from? Been there, done that. So, I decided to sit down with Dillinger 4 member, Erik, and prepare him for the consequences of naming their newest album "Versus God." I thought that if they were joking that they would fight God, they better be prepared in case the fight actually took place. I knew that if they were actually going to fight the being that created the earth and the heaven and light and dark and all that good stuff, they were going to need my help. So, I saw it as my mission to train Erik so that his band might triumph over Jah. Below is the transcription of my rigorous training program.

**Who do I have here?**

Erik from the band Dillinger 4.

**And what do you do in the band?**

I sing and try to play guitar.

**Okay Erik, your new album is called "Versus God." So, does that mean that you'd be willing to actually fight God if God challenged you to a fight?**

Yeah sure, but we're all atheists so we doubt God will be challenging us to a fight anytime soon.

**Well, let's just say there is a God and God wanted to fight you. Like, if God just showed up on earth and wanted to fight you, would you guys do it?**

Yes, I guess we'd have to.

# QUOTE

**Good. First thing we're going to do in this training session is a word recognition. I'm going to say a word and you tell me the first thing that pops into your head. This will help you if in the fight God throws out something you're not prepared for. This way you will be prepared. Ready?**

Ready as I'll ever be. I had to do this in school with my friends. The school psychologist or guidance counselor or whatever would say would say "teacher" and I'd say something like, "ass-hole." So, I guess this is basically the same thing, only on a much

grandeur scale.

**Would the psychologist show you Rorschach tests as well?**

Oh yeah, the whole nine yards. I was a fucked up kid.

**Well, God isn't going to care if you're good or bad. He just wants to fight you. Holy.**

Water.

**Angel.**

With thirty faces.



Heaven.

Hell.

Sin.

7.

Hell.

Heaven.

Christmas.

Tree.

Jesus.

Christ.

Rabbi.

Um, you've stumped me.

**No, God isn't going to accept that, you have to say something.**

Okay, Joe... Rabbi Joe.

Church.

Synagogue.

Satan.

Fun.

# K L A T,

**Okay, you passed with flying colors. Would you like to rate your performance?**

I feel pretty good about it. But, word association is hard stuff. It makes me nervous like when I was in the psychologist's office. Like I'm being tested or something. I'd rather just fight God than play games with him.

**So you think word association is harder than boxing?**

Yeah, boxing God would be no problem—'cause as I said I don't even believe in God—but word association is a lot of pressure.

**Let's talk about the details of the fight. Would you fight God alone?**

No, it's the whole band. It's us against the world so it might as well be us against God together.

**What would you wear?**

Well, we're not really into the whole superhero tights and stuff, so I'd say just our usual jeans and T-shirts. We wouldn't feel the need to get dressed up for God. Especially since it's bound to be a rough fight, so if we had costumes they would just get ripped and messed up.

**What would God wear? Wait a sec, what does God look like?**

Well that's a tough one. We're assuming here that God has a human body. And, most people assume that God is a very old man with a beard and a flowing white robe or something. But, God could be a fat bald guy, God could have 10 arms and an elephant's trunk, or God could just be a cloud of vapor or something—which would make it hard for us to hit God. We're really not that concerned, though 'cause here we are presenting this challenge: God if you're real we will fight you. But, God

# BAND

hasn't shown up yet, so it's unlikely that God will ever show up. Plus we haven't had any bad luck or weird dreams or anything like that. Maybe God is hiding.

**So, if you were on tour and the Mississippi River suddenly parted, would you simply believe in God or would you just think it was the wind or something?**

Yeah, I'd think it was just the wind.

**Okay, would the fight be in a ring or somewhere else?**

Well, it's funny 'cause we were thinking of making posters where we would have our fists raised and be looking all

tough and we'd be staring up at the clouds or something. So, since we're staring at the clouds in this poster we thought up that would make it hard to be in a ring. So, I'd have to say it would probably be outside where God could have all the elements of nature at God's disposal. Although, if it were in a ring it would be easier to whip God's ass, 'cause then we could use the turnbuckles on the ring-side and do body-slams and other cool moves.

**So, what if you guys are about to fight God and**





**God pulls out a switchblade. What would you do?**

I'd yell, "God, you dirty bastard. Put down that knife and fight fair like a real God." Have you ever read *Preacher Comics*?

**Um, no. What are those?**

They're 7 or 8 graphic novels about this crazy preacher who goes around the world looking to fight God. And, he has weird adventures and stuff. He also has a sidekick who's a drunken Irish vampire or something. It's still around, you should find it.

**If someone in the band were to be your sidekick who would it be?**

Oh jeez, probably no sidekicks. We're all equals. But, Billy loves Batman so he would have to be the main superhero. And Lane would probably be Robin if that were the case.

**Just on a side note have you guys ever gotten in fights on tour?**

Yeah, we've had a few with people. We usually fared pretty well, although I'm pretty small so I stayed behind Patty. We're pretty good fighters, that's why I'm not too worried about God.

**What if God played dirty and hit below the belt or kicked sand in your face or something?**

Well, we're pretty tough, as I said. So, God would really have to do anything God could. Also there's four Dillinger 4 members and only one God, so I guess if he kicked sand at us one of us could get around the sand or kick him in the nuts or something to get back at him.

**Do you think God would be afraid of you?**

Yes. We play mean guitars and we're atheists. So, if we just stopped believing in God then God wouldn't exist any longer. You see God only exists because people believe God exists. So, if we just thought, "wait, there is no God," then the fight's over: we win by default. God would know that and therefore he would be scared of us. But, if God played dirty we'd probably get a pile-on going and smother him before he could kick more sand at us.

**Would this be a tag-team event?**

Yeah, probably. The fight would be tough and we all smoke and we're out of shape so we'd need to rest every minute or so.

**Where are God's weak spots?**

Well, if God is a he, then he's got balls like every other guy. But, what if God isn't human at all? What if God is a cloud, like in the poster. It's pretty tough to hit a cloud and do any significant damage. So, we'd get a vacuum or something to suck him up. Like in *Ghost Busters*.

**What if God turned you guys into frogs?**

What? God's a witch?

**No, but God can do anything God wants. So, if God wanted to fight frogs instead of rockers, God could change you into frogs.**

Well, we're so committed that we'd keep fighting. Unless, we suddenly lost our human fighting instinct and saw a pond nearby. In which case we'd forget the fight and go swimming.

**Good point. I think you guys would be smart frogs.**

Cool, then we'd still fight.

**Who's team would Satan be on?**

Well, that's a tough one, 'cause as I said before a bunch of times we don't believe in God. Satan is a different story, though, 'cause Satan is so much fun to believe in. I mean, what kind of punk doesn't believe in Satan? Satan would have a vested interest in seeing God go down so Satan would fight for us. We could use the help. The really tough part is that if Satan beat God with our help, then not only did we kill God, but Satan and Satan's evil would rule. There would be no good. See, we're a band that likes the best of both good and bad. So, if Satan won, then we wouldn't be able to enjoy the good things that God stands for. We'd just live in hell... on earth.

**So what would be an ideal outcome of the fight.**

Not to kill God. We don't want to kill anyone. We would just give God a good pummeling and banish God away. That way God would still exist and there would be good in the world, but God wouldn't be bugging us anymore. Then we'd do a massive radio promotion under the premise that we beat up God.

**Would movie stars want to date you if you beat God? I mean, you'd be famous, right?**

Depends on the movie star. Nicole Kidman would 'cause she's scientologist. John Travolta—who I once met since he's the uncle of a friend of mine—would hang out with us. But, I'm married and all of us have significant others so we would turn down the movie stars.

**What would your pre-fight training regimen be, other than the mental side that we're doing now?**

Um, I own a bar, so we'd all head down to the bar before the fight and feast on Budweiser and beer nuts.

**You wouldn't bust out the imported beer for this one?**

No way, Budweiser is always the way to go. It's like Coke. No matter where you go or what you do, you always know what you're getting in a Bud. With those imported beers you're taking your chances. When you're fighting God you need security, so we'd stick with the Bud.

**Okay, how many sit-ups can you do at one time without stopping?**

Oh God, I have no idea? I haven't done sit-ups in years. I wouldn't start for this, though. I feel confident we can kick God's ass fat and lazy. Patty was actually the captain of his high school wrestling or football team, I forget which. He's the best athlete out of all of us. Leave the sit-ups to him. That is until we were both expelled from high school.

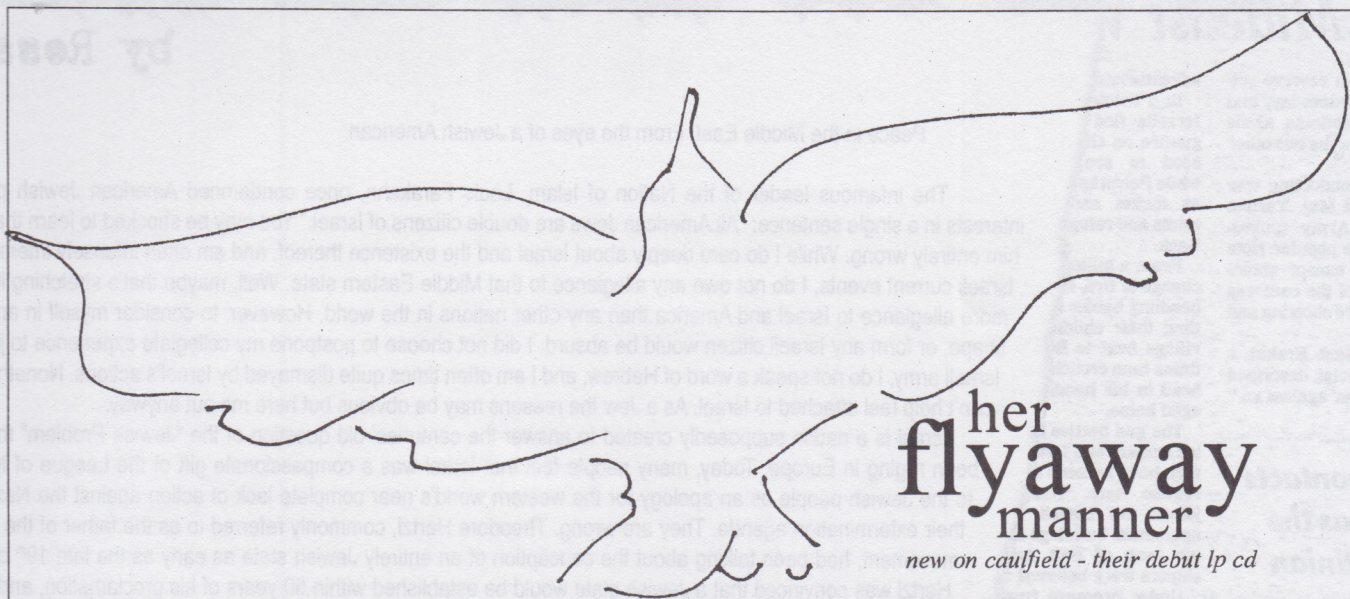
**For challenging God in class?**

No, a lot of absences.

**Thanks a lot Erik. That was fun. Good luck.**

Oh we don't need luck, we've got Satan on our team.





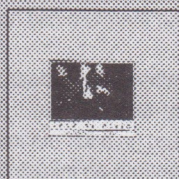
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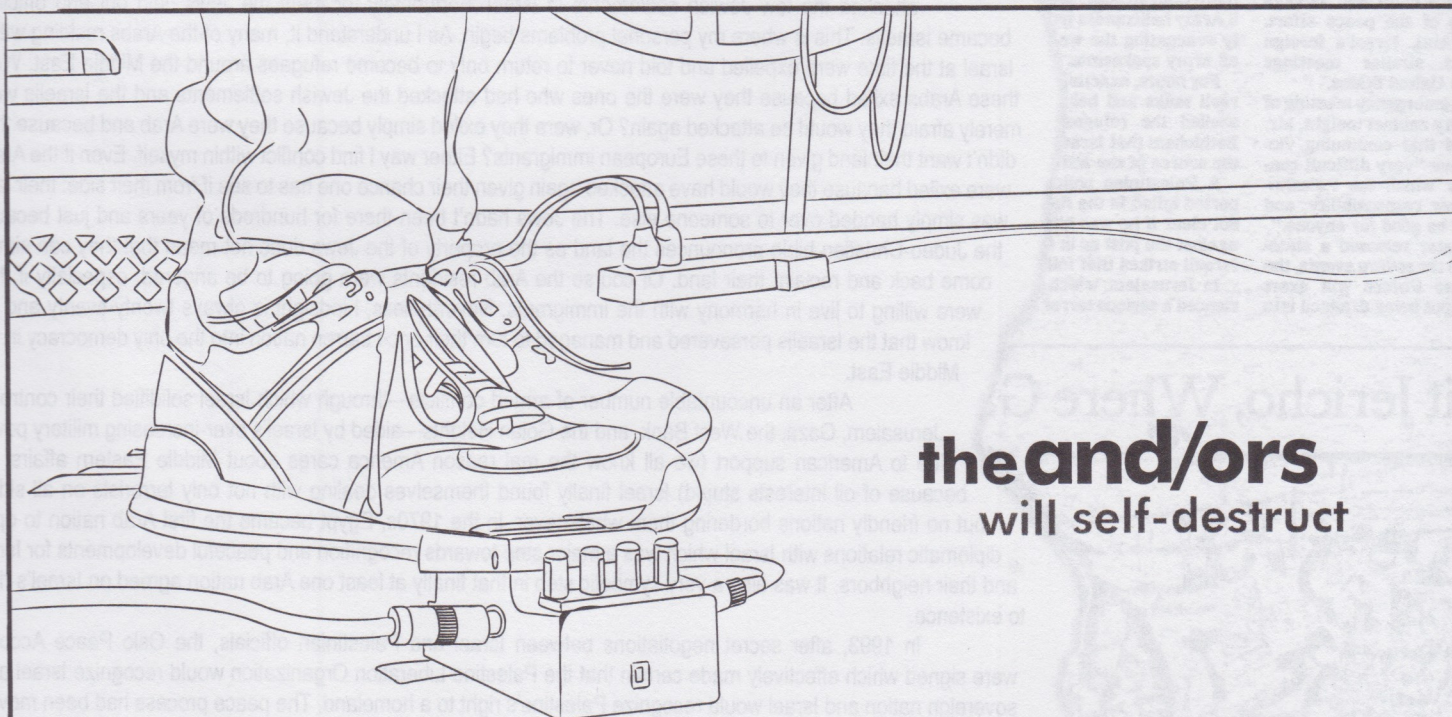
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# Is it too Late for Peace

by Ross

Peace in the Middle East: From the eyes of a Jewish American

The infamous leader of the Nation of Islam, Louis Farakahn, once condemned American Jewish political interests in a single sentence: "All American Jews are double citizens of Israel." You may be shocked to learn that I find him entirely wrong. While I do care deeply about Israel and the existence thereof, and am often intensely interested in Israeli current events, I do not owe any allegiance to that Middle Eastern state. Well, maybe that's stretching it. I feel more allegiance to Israel and America than any other nations in the world. However, to consider myself in any way, shape, or form any Israeli citizen would be absurd. I did not choose to postpone my collegiate experience to join the Israeli army, I do not speak a word of Hebrew, and I am often times quite dismayed by Israel's actions. Nonetheless I can't help feel attached to Israel. As a Jew the reasons may be obvious but here me out anyway.

Israel is a nation supposedly created to answer the centuries' old question of the "Jewish Problem" that had been raging in Europe. Today, many people feel that Israel was a compassionate gift of the League of Nations to the Jewish people as an apology for the western world's near complete lack of action against the Nazis and their extermination agenda. They are wrong. Theodore Hertzl, commonly referred to as the father of the Zionist movement, had been talking about the conception of an entirely Jewish state as early as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hertzl was convinced that a Jewish state would be established within 50 years of his proclamation, and a little after 50 years' time had expired he was proved correct. Remember, during the time of Hertzl's work he knew nothing about the pending Jewish holocaust, and therefore had no reason to believe that a goal to destroy the Jewish race would be Israel's ultimate catalyst.

And his followers were many. Soon after Hertzl's ideas brought a new ideological direction for Jews all over Europe in the form of Zionism, a healthy number of Jews decided to immigrate to what was then called Palestine. There they not only began to buy land (in a fair manner, I am told), but they set to work at planting trees and crops, draining swamps, and setting up an infrastructure. At this point the Palestinians and the Jews lived in relative peace, spending most of their animosity on the British colonists who ruled Palestine with an iron, albeit incompetent fist.

Fast forward to 1948 when Israel is granted a charter to be a nation. As soon as independence was declared a nation the resident Arabs, as wells a number of neighboring Arab nations, simultaneously attacked the few Jewish settlements in Israel. Fortunately for them the Jews held out and officially became Israelis. This is where my personal problems begin. As I understand it, many of the Arabs residing within Israel at the time were expelled and told never to return only to become refugees around the Middle East. Were these Arabs exiled because they were the ones who had attacked the Jewish settlements and the Israelis were merely afraid they would be attacked again? Or, were they exiled simply because they were Arab and because they didn't want their land given to these European immigrants? Either way I find conflict within myself. Even if the Arabs were exiled because they would have attacked again given their chance one has to see if from their side: their land was simply handed over to someone else. The Jews hadn't been there for hundreds of years and just because the Judeo-Christian bible pronounces the land as the property of the Jews does not mean that they can simply come back and reclaim their land. Of course the Arab residents were going to be angered, especially if they were willing to live in harmony with the immigrants. Nevertheless, hindsight is always twenty-twenty and we know that the Israelis persevered and managed to turn their once barren nation into the only democracy in the Middle East.

After an uncountable number of armed conflicts—through which Israel solidified their control of Jerusalem, Gaza, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights—aided by Israel's ever-increasing military power due to American support (we all know the real reason America cares about Middle Eastern affairs: it's because of oil interests stupid) Israel finally found themselves dealing with not only terrorists on all sides, but no friendly nations bordering them whatsoever. In the 1970s, Egypt became the first Arab nation to open diplomatic relations with Israel which was a major step towards recognition and peaceful developments for Israel and their neighbors. It was also a very symbolic step in that finally at least one Arab nation agreed on Israel's right to existence.

In 1993, after secret negotiations between Israel and Palestinian officials, the Oslo Peace Accords were signed which effectively made certain that the Palestine Liberation Organization would recognize Israel as a sovereign nation and Israel would recognize Palestine's right to a homeland. The peace process had been moving rather smoothly, all things considered, and late last year it looked like Palestine would actually get to call themselves an official nation with an effective government instead of merely a group of displaced persons. Then Ariel Sharon—the Israeli Likud party leader—decided to walk into the Al Aqsa Mosque in the Arab section of Jerusalem, right near the Western Wall (the holiest site in Judaism), to demonstrate Israel's control over the temple and all of Jerusalem. The result was the Intafada, or uprising, that has claimed over 350 lives to date. My problems resume here.

But, see the history of the conflict from the Israeli's point of view: they were given this land fairly and squarely and they have the right to defend it. Unfortunately the ancient Jewish ideology of an eye-for-an-eye a-tooth-

matic contacts renewed as the i-Palestinian shed goes on.

at spoke from his home in a rockets exploded in the id. He said the Israeli au had prevented him from wn, which had forced him flight to the United States. raeli side informed us that owed to leave Jericho," he thus I cannot travel on my mission to Washington fork." expected to meet with diplomats in an another restore calm and salvage aims of the peace effort. en Ami, Israel's foreign has similar meetings the United States. an emergency meeting of curity cabinet tonight, Mr. rned that continuing vio have "very difficult con for which the Palestin l bear responsibility, and not be good for anyone." e later released a state- e to the severe events, the fense Forces will exert without being dragged into

lit Jericho, Where G





# in the Middle East?

for-a-tooth is too strongly embedded in its people and the rest of the world forgets that their actions in this conflict have all been based out of the deluded view of defense. Furthermore, consider the past summer's peace talks led by President Clinton at Camp David. There the former Israeli president Ehud Barak and Yasir Arafat worked on a plan to divide Israel and Palestine fairly so that Palestine might actually be a legitimate nation. Many Israelis accuse Barak of being too fair. When he ran for office he promised not to give up any part of Jerusalem to the Palestinians. He also promised to limit any secession of lands to the Palestinians to a small sliver of Israeli property. However, at Camp David Barak detailed a plan to give the Palestinians control of over 90 percent of the West Bank and Gaza, authority over East Jerusalem, and a few other major areas neighboring Jerusalem. Instead of making headway and suggesting alternate plans for an agreement, Arafat simply rejected the enormous proposal and left Camp David without a word. Within months, the conflict began and it was Israel who looked like the tyrants and the Palestinians who were to be the martyrs. But don't you see? Barak's offer may not have been grandiose in the grand scheme of Israeli history, but it was far more than fair. Plus, it was more than any former Israeli president would ever offer to Arafat. Yet, Arafat rejected the proposal and did not suggest a counteroffer, which he should have done.

Sharon is an asshole. Plain and simple. He has made a career in Israeli politics out of being an asshole. His agenda is to lead Israeli conservatives with the goal of hampering the peace process by way of a) seceding little or no land to the Palestinians or other Arab nations; and, b) increasing the number of questionable Israeli settlements. Furthermore, Sharon has had at least two major human-rights violations on his record which all but destroyed his political life for the duration of the '80s. Throughout his career he has basically ignored the fact—as do most Israelis, understandably so—that the Palestinians not only deserve the right to a homeland but that they should perhaps be allowed to return to the land they once controlled. Unlike former Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, who sees a Middle Eastern future of free-trade and harmony, Sharon believes that the Palestinians and Israelis simply cannot live together. His vision is a typically militaristic one: that the world has walls which are there for a reason. And, that the best thing for Israeli security is to enforce a wall between the Jews and the Muslims.

The problems become more complicated when one considers Yasir Arafat's response. Instead of curbing the uprising, controlling his people's violence, and trying to restore order, Arafat has done little. Arafat allowed the uprising to continue for many months and the gigantic press battle that ensued was easily won by the Palestinians. Instead of one side being the better of the two and giving some ground to the other, the Palestinians attacked Israeli soldiers in a manner one might easily recognize as terrorist, while the Israelis foolishly responded to by blowing the hell out of Palestinian military and bureaucratic targets. Now the whole world looks upon the Palestinians as freedom fighters and the Israelis as oppressive tyrants. Sadly, at the Davos World Economic Forum a while back, after Shimon Peres warmly extended an "olive branch to Arafat," as the New York Times put it, Arafat "torched it" and "denounced Israel for its "fascist military aggression" and "colonialist armed expansionism," and its policies of "murder, persecution, assassination, destruction and devastation." One must wonder what Arafat wants in this deal. Does he really want to see peace between the two nations, or would he rather see his people glorified in their martyrdom. One must question whether Arafat ever wanted peace in the first place as Israel routinely tries to lend a warm handshake only to see their face slapped. Sure, the Israeli military is often times too willing to use force to curb the violence, but what are they supposed to do when Arafat and his Fatah organization just will not curb the violence themselves. Similarly, what more can Israel do to show they want to help resolve the conflict in a swift and peaceful manner. I fear time may have run out for the Palestinians as Sharon surely will not extend any olive branch in the near future.

So I say in conclusion. I do not condone Israel's hasty and thoughtless attacks on so-called Palestinian "military" targets—which clearly are not used for military purposes. But, I do not think the Palestinians are solving the matter by choosing tactics of firing at Israeli soldiers while hiding in crowds of women and children. I definitely think the Palestinians deserve a homeland and I believe those who lost their land after Israel's independence should be justly compensated. But, I believe that times change and the way out of this problem is not holy war, but rather sitting down at a table, shaking-hands (and meaning it), and talking out the two factions' differences in a calm and rational manner. This is not what is happening because each side sincerely believes they are right and each side strongly believes that when they fight they fight in defense. The answer here is for one side to be bigger than the other; for one side to take a lesson from the peaceful movements of Ghandi and Dr. Martin Luther King, rather than the self-righteous views of Osama Bin Laden or J. Edgar Hoover. I fear now that with Ariel Sharon's recent election victory that any time for peace may be running out. Plus, knowing George Bush's completely naïve foreign policy stance, we won't see the kind of help coming from the White House that we did with Clinton. I fear that too many ties have already been broken and that any trust between the two sides that had been built up over the past 50 years may be destroyed. For this I am sorry. But, I still have hope that one side will come to their senses. And, for their sake... I hope they wise up pretty darn quickly.

V.N.

argued that his legitimate successor need not to ap- Yugoslavia was ing or voting in bly.

t, a month after vic in elections; ca formally re- federal Republic of mitted. His applica- ly through the Unit- ucracy, with the Se- recommending on a General Assembly

approve it. —All four former Yugo- lics — Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia, which are pendent countries and- tions members — co-sp- Assembly resolution, adopted without a vote. —Bosnia's ambassador ed Nations, Muhamed Sa the 'republics' eight-year that Belgrade apply as a Nations member was not seek vengeance against vic.

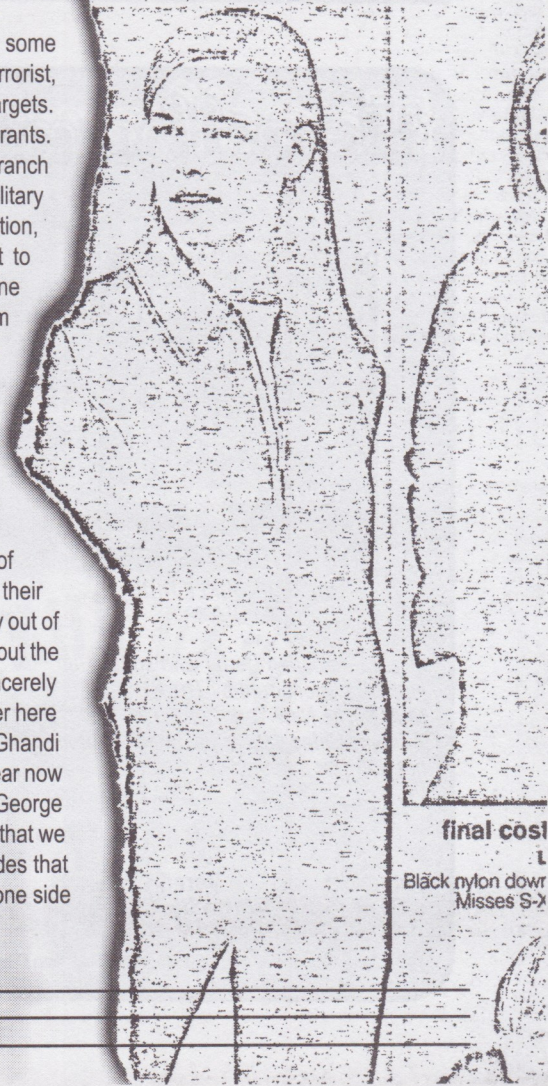
"This is really about neighbor to come join us ily of nations," he said.

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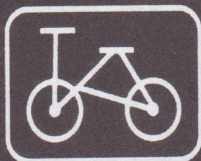
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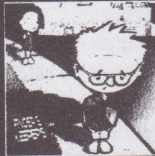
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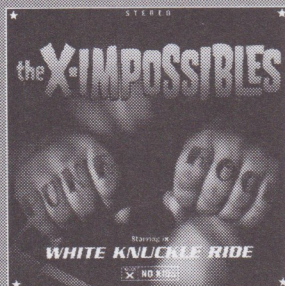
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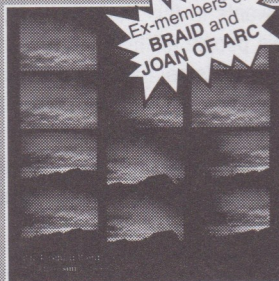
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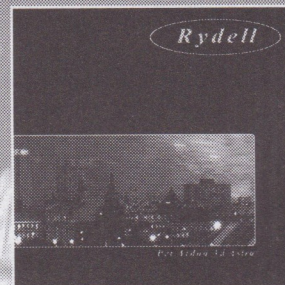
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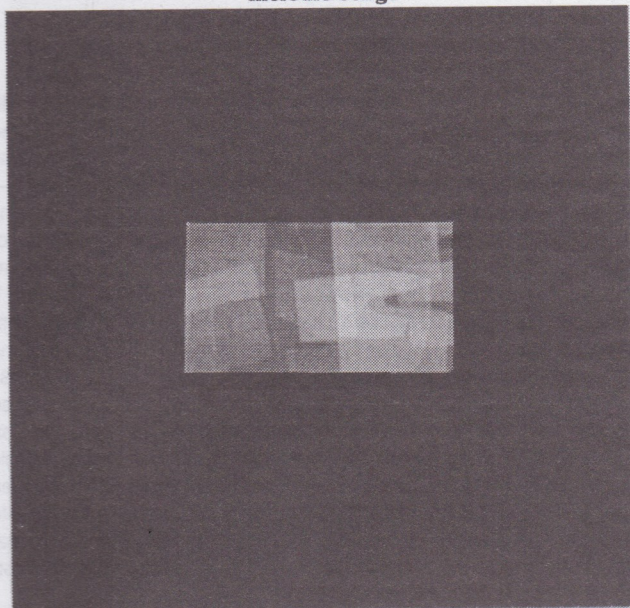
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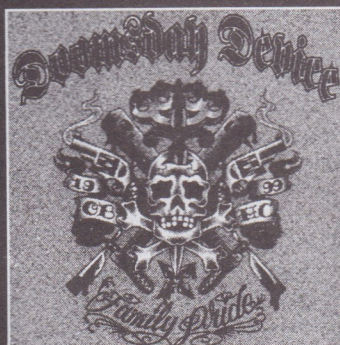


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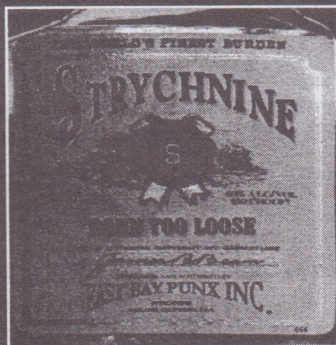
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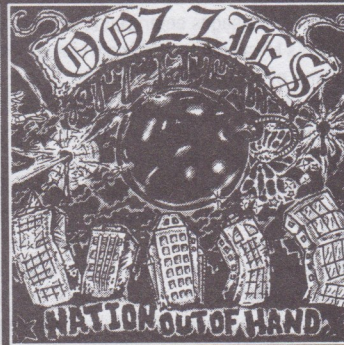
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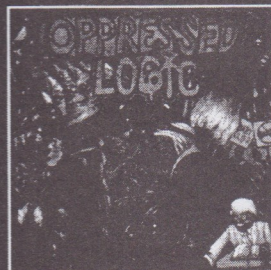
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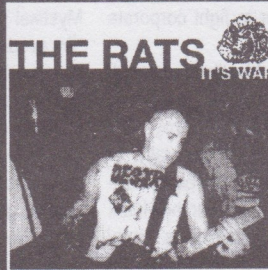
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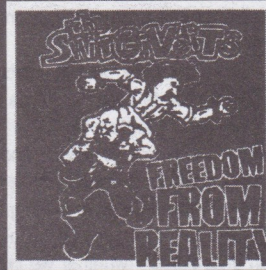
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# Shake Ya Ass: Postmodern Prophecy

by Heidi Diehl

The first time I heard "Shake Ya Ass" was on the sound system of a big blue van. What struck me, however, was not only the beats, but the power of the words. Mystikal, an artist on the Jive label whose anthem "Shake Ya Ass" has been getting lots of airtime on the radio, makes big money for the words he lays down. Like many successful pop artists before him, Mystikal realizes the importance of constant re-birth and re-formulation in our fast-paced, impatient world: "y'all bitches can't catch me and you won't". The album cover of 1999's "Unpredictable" shows Mystikal's face as an incomplete puzzle; he is constantly reconstructing himself. Mystikal's identity is about more than just market appeal though; his words serve as a cultural barometer. More importantly, Mystikal directly attacks the media which supports him; "Shake Ya Ass" is a protest song, although a subtle one. Some of the other people in the big blue van that September night questioned how such concise raunchy phrases could garner so much money and acclaim. The

while still imagining "everyone in leather". Media culture makes individuality possible through consumption; the final frontier has become a shopping mall.

For artists, especially those whose work incorporates the political, the imbalance is particularly difficult. The choice seems to lie between creating in private, or, if you want to get your message across, altering your form and message in order to be palatable to the mainstream. However, as technology makes the sharing of information more prevalent and rapid, fringe culture is co-opted by the mainstream. To be different is to be cool, both of these attributes are now able to be bought and sold. Artists are losing their choices; selling out is harder to avoid. This is not to say that wonderful, valuable things are no longer happening outside of the mainstream (it's pretty much the only place anything worthwhile does happen). But if we do want to preserve what we have had, before it gets sucked into the corporate media machine, we have to become at once more creative, aware, and active about what's going on

confining, and lays down his critique: "be cool, and don't worry about how I'm rippin this shit". We need to stop competing with each other--we all can dance without judging each other. Indeed, we need to start working together; Mystikal proposes socialism as the embodiment of his ideals. Shared resources-- "get mine and you gon get yours"-- and more government involvement in the social welfare and livelihood of citizens-- "got a job for you/the braided up pimp is back"--would allow us all to lead decent and equal lives. Mystikal's challenge of the objectification of women's bodies by the media today also presents a challenge to established male roles. Shake Ya Ass explodes with both romantic affection and untouchable toughness; to represent the conflicting messages the media assigns to masculinity, Mystikal states both "wobble wobble I'm infatuated" and "I'm nastier than a full grown German Shepard". Its hard to say if the joining the mainstream while quietly subverting it is the best (or most change-inducing) path to take. Some artists are less discreet than

real power of Shake Ya Ass lies within those words; Mystikal will guide us if we are able to break apart the subversive messages entangled in his seemingly simple words. As Mystikal sings, "this ain't for no small booties"; in a time of extremes, we must be extreme ourselves if we want to be heard. I'm not sure if "Shake Ya Ass" accomplishes that. Mystikal's revolutionary rhetoric is delicate, and it lies within what seems to be, at first listen, just another self-glorifying, female-objectifying radio rap song. Mystikal is subversive, but he still comes across as a megalomaniac. Still, as I was riding in the van that September evening, (and every time I have heard "Shake Ya Ass" --in the grocery store and the dentist's office), I realized more of Mystikal's commentary, from his feminist stance to his criticism of capitalism. "You gotta bend all the way over to dance off this"; we've got to embrace true alternatives in order to fight corporate media power.

However, some artists, Mystikal included, use the corporate mainstream as a means of toppling it, using their membership as a tool to destroy. The struggle in the music world, and more generally, in popular culture today, seems to lie between selling out--joining the masses--and remaining true to your individual roots. Our monolithic media, whose influence is pretty much unavoidable (whether we like it or not), fuels the impossible balance; its message is to "think different"

and what we can do to stop it. Shake Ya Ass uses both subtle sarcasm and blatant criticism of our media soaked postmodern world. Mystikal uses two voices, a whispery, coaxing one, and screaming, commanding one. Here we have the introspective, aesthetic world of the artist versus the tough control of the media. Mystikal's technique is complex: he both uses typical messages and subtly argues against it.

Mystikal lays down the paradox big corporate media presents: you can shake ya ass and do your own thing, but at the same time, you must watch yourself--to be successful, the artist cannot stray too far from the established norm. The lyrics go on to slyly mock media's commodification of sexuality and the objectification of women: "Shake ya ass/show me what you workin with". Here, Mystikal's challenge could easily be missed, but Mystikal gets even more direct in his mockery, singing "I'm proud of my poo nanny/ a dollar for my booty". Our selves are worth more than the monetary value corporate media assigns. This theme goes along with Mystikal's staunch anti-capitalist views-- he highlights individual performance and competition throughout the song as a means of showing us their downfall-- "if you feel you've got the biggest one, imma come shake ya ass". You can dance (and exist) if you are the best, says the capitalist economy, but there's no room for anything less. Mystikal hates these narrow

Mystikal, but still, are things going to change if we go along with them? Shake Ya Ass has some intriguing questions buried within its rhymes, but its discouraging that there isn't more discourse around it. However, Mystikal says "this yo fuckin song", and he's right. While our generation hasn't had a hand in creating the corporate media homogeneity, now is the time to break it down. Art can do a lot to make us aware and angry, but we need to act. We can't let what's beautiful, independent, and honest die.

The question that's always on my mind is what to do. I support independent artists, labels and stores. But is that enough? As corporate media gains power and drowns out (or steals) what alternatives we do have, it doesn't seem enough to vote with our feet anymore. And joining the mainstream, as Mystikal has done, doesn't really present a big enough challenge to what's wrong. We may be angry, and feel like we have no control over what's going on. Its true--alone we have no power. Addressing all of us, Mystikal says "bitch what's happenin let em see/show the world". We can join together to preserve true alternatives; its ironic that this message comes to us from a radio hit. But regardless, we've woken up; as Mystikal has said, we must raise our voices by shaking our asses.

*Shake ya ass / But watch ya self / Shake*

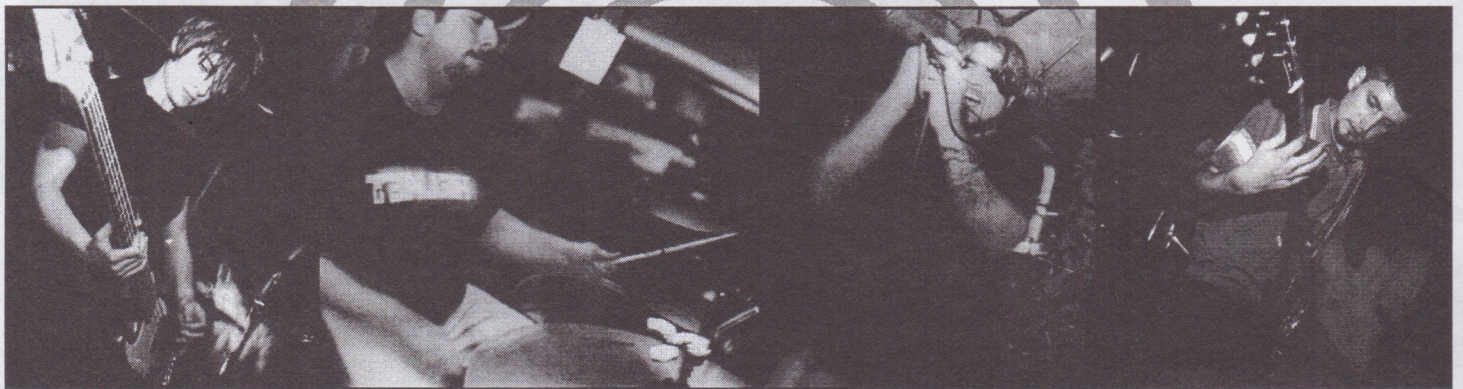


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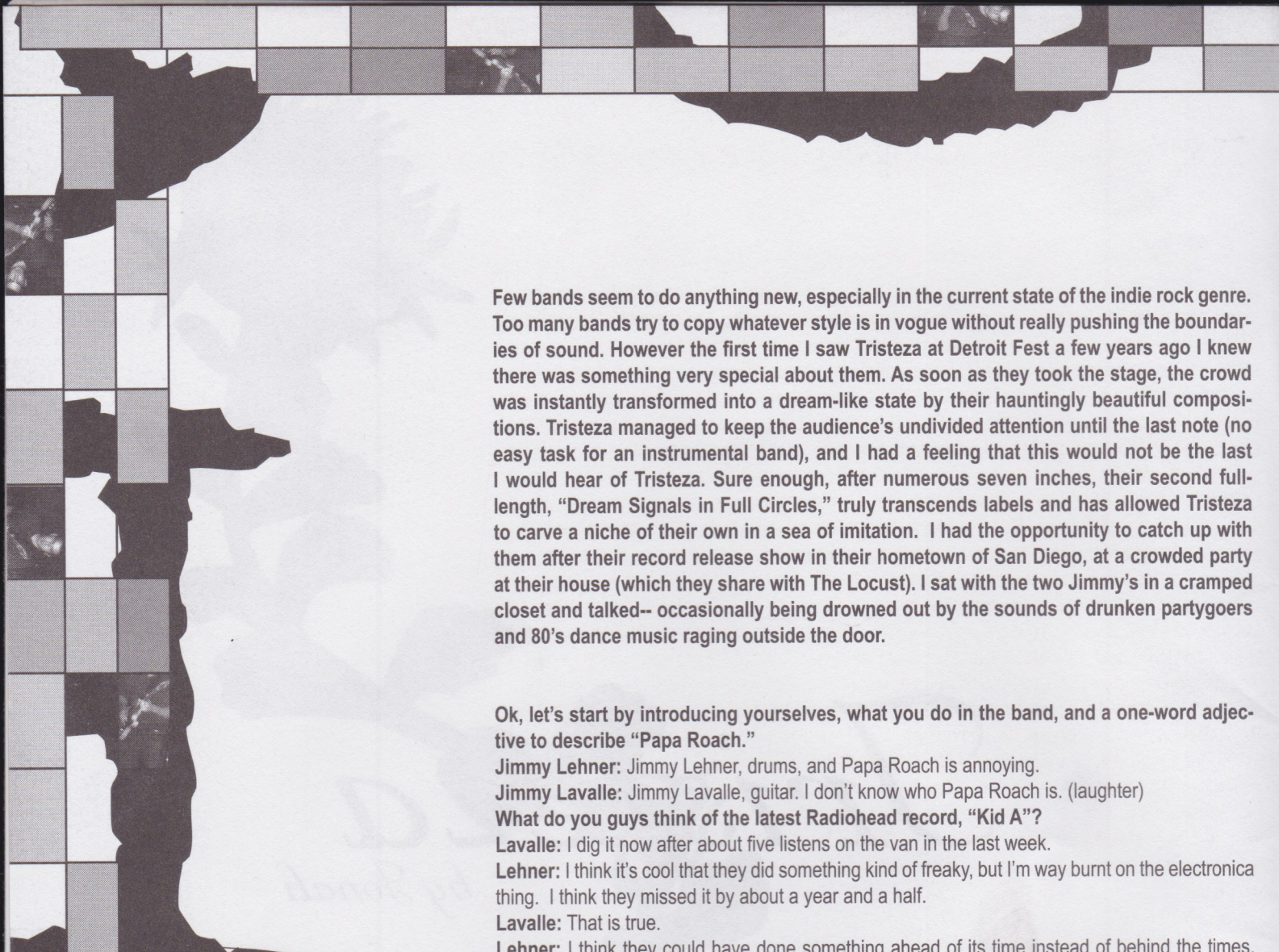




# *Tristeza*

*by Jonah*





Few bands seem to do anything new, especially in the current state of the indie rock genre. Too many bands try to copy whatever style is in vogue without really pushing the boundaries of sound. However the first time I saw Tristeza at Detroit Fest a few years ago I knew there was something very special about them. As soon as they took the stage, the crowd was instantly transformed into a dream-like state by their hauntingly beautiful compositions. Tristeza managed to keep the audience's undivided attention until the last note (no easy task for an instrumental band), and I had a feeling that this would not be the last I would hear of Tristeza. Sure enough, after numerous seven inches, their second full-length, "Dream Signals in Full Circles," truly transcends labels and has allowed Tristeza to carve a niche of their own in a sea of imitation. I had the opportunity to catch up with them after their record release show in their hometown of San Diego, at a crowded party at their house (which they share with The Locust). I sat with the two Jimmy's in a cramped closet and talked-- occasionally being drowned out by the sounds of drunken partygoers and 80's dance music raging outside the door.

Ok, let's start by introducing yourselves, what you do in the band, and a one-word adjective to describe "Papa Roach."

**Jimmy Lehner:** Jimmy Lehner, drums, and Papa Roach is annoying.

**Jimmy Lavallo:** Jimmy Lavallo, guitar. I don't know who Papa Roach is. (laughter)

**What do you guys think of the latest Radiohead record, "Kid A"?**

**Lavallo:** I dig it now after about five listens on the van in the last week.

**Lehner:** I think it's cool that they did something kind of freaky, but I'm way burnt on the electronica thing. I think they missed it by about a year and a half.

**Lavallo:** That is true.

**Lehner:** I think they could have done something ahead of its time instead of behind the times. It just took a long time to put the record out. It's still a decent record. It's interesting enough to make people dig it, but I don't think it's gonna stand any time. I think people will be burnt on it in a few months. There are some good songs on it but it doesn't compare to "Ok Computer," that's for sure.

**Lavallo:** That album was fucking ahead of its time

**Why the name Tristeza, are you sad guys or what?**

**Lavallo:** We're bummed dudes (laughter). No, I don't know. The term is actually taken from sort of a "good-bye" sadness feeling more than just than the upset type sadness.

**Lehner:** Yeah, the name came from a song called "Tristeza." It's a Brazilian song in the Portuguese language. The name also means sadness in Portuguese. The song title means sadness, but it's a "good-bye" sadness like when you have to say good-bye to somebody.

**Lavallo:** I think of it more as a "see you later" sadness. Kind of like we make music that's kind of sad but not really. More of like a goodbye to that. It's sadness, but goodbye to that sadness, don't be sad! (laughter)

**Which one of you was in The Locust and the Crimson Curse?**

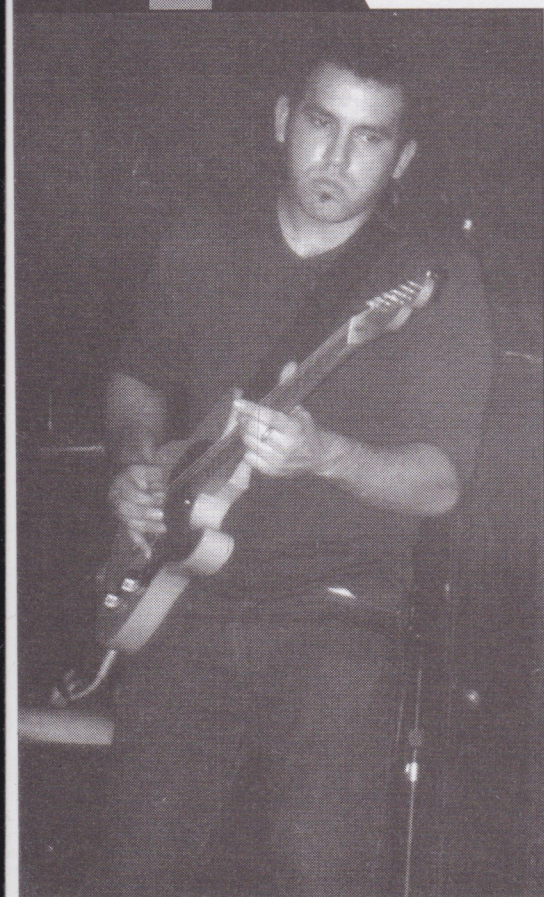
**Lavallo and Lehner:** Yeah.

**You both were in both of those bands?**

**Lavallo:** Yeah, I'll show you something. (Jimmy Lavallo pulls down his lower lip to expose a tattoo of the Locust logo)

**So Tristeza must be a pretty dramatic change. How are things different for you now?**

**Lavallo:** In the Locust I didn't write anything, I just wrote my own parts. In the Crimson Curse, Christopher (Tristeza's other guitarist) and I wrote everything. I was kind of thrown into both those bands in a weird way. I had the option to join a band, start touring, and it was drawn out for a couple of years. Musically, Tristeza and the Album Leaf are what I've been doing pretty much the whole time I've been playing. But I was playing out in hardcore bands and doing that whole circuit, touring and having fun. It finally got to the point where I was just like "I'm not doing what I really





want to do, I'm not following my heart." So when I got back from tour with the Locust I quit both bands and I just wanted to end it all. Christopher had been working on what were the roots of Tristeza, and we lived together so we started writing together and that was what started Tristeza. I enjoyed playing hardcore. It's kind of like you start in hardcore because anyone who really plays music in our scene has played in a hardcore band at one point.

**Lehner:** It's a quick way to get into the scene. You start a hardcore band, do a tour, and put out a record really quickly. That's how I learned to set up shows, release a record, deal with people, and that's the idea.

**Lavalle:** When you're young and in high school, hardcore is totally fun. You play to have a good time and you play all the time. Sometimes you can't even hear what's going on, and you're going nuts and getting all fucking crazy and shit and you jump around and it makes you feel good. You beat the fucking shit out of your drums and it's....

**Lehner:** A good physical happiness

**Lavalle:** But then when you get older your tastes start to change. There are a lot of people who played hardcore back in the day that don't really anymore. I'm not saying that style music isn't what they were meant to do, but you grow up and start to realize what you actually want with your life. When you're eighteen you have a totally different set of values than when you're twenty-two. Basically you decide what you want to do, and if you really want to take music seriously. I'm not saying that pop-punk bands or the Get-Up Kids aren't doing what they want to be doing. You've just gotta start somewhere.

**Lehner:** Hardcore seems to be the easiest place to start out.

**Was it a conscious discussion when you started the band to not have vocals it or did it just happen that way? I'm not familiar with many purely instrumental bands in your genre.**

**Lavalle:** When we first started out we were planning on having vocals. Then we played our first show, and we didn't have a vocalist yet so we just did it without vocals. We decided we like it better that way. You can interpret the music in your own way instead of having some guy screaming away.

**Lehner:** It's comfortable. The stuff sounded complete without vocals. It leaves things kind of open-ended. We could still go that route, (having vocals) there's a big space for evolving. We could do it because we're not limited. We haven't done it, but we could.

**Lavalle:** We did do it once...

**Lehner:** I have vocals made to every one of our songs. One time I actually recorded an overdub vocal track to this one song, which sounded pretty good. But that's the only vocal thing that's been recorded. It was never released.

**Do you sometimes feel that it's hard to play the songs live and bring a lot of energy into your performance? How does the crowd generally react during a live performance, do they move around at all?**

**Lavalle:** It's not hard for us to play it, but it might be hard for people to get into it because people are kind of reserved. This what I was thinking about tonight when I was playing: our dance parts are good but we don't play them long enough, so people maybe don't catch on. Maybe we have too many changes in some of those dance parts. But people don't have to dance to be into it, you know? I think there's a visual stimulation. I think we're interesting enough to watch and I think that people want to hear the song variation, they want to close their eyes and just listen to it and they do. People get into it but it's not like a movement type thing.

**Do you ever feel like you're alienating yourselves from commercial success by playing instrumental music? Do you think that some people will discover that you're an instrumental group and not even give your music a chance?**

**Lavalle:** The charts are showing us that that's not happening because we're doing well on the college charts. Mainstream music is not something I care for.

**Lehner:** It's not about us alienating, I think it's just that people don't know how to deal with us.





They're not ready for it. They're the ones who are alienated.

**Lavalle:** Led Zeppelin didn't get any airplay; they were really alienating. We're not doing this to be radio friendly, we're doing this because this is what we want to be doing. We're just normal dudes playing in a band, making music, going on tour, and seeing the country.

**Where do you go from here? What do you bring into the mix to progress musically or push the envelope?**

**Lehner:** I think we need to sound more ourselves and not like an odd studio mix. Sometimes when we record it doesn't really sound like us. I think we need to sound a bit more natural. I think we need to stretch out our tones a little bit maybe get a little more normal with some of the stuff. I think we need to become a bit more normal, but not become a normal band.

**Lavalle:** We're just doing what we're doing, and what we come up with is what we're going to come up with. If it's better than the last thing or if it's worse, sorry but it's just gonna be what it is.

**Lehner:** I just want to be convinced that we've evolved. We're getting smarter about recording and we're getting smarter about the overall vibe of our records. As far as our next record's songs, we'll probably write a lot of songs that won't be on the next record. We might do other things like some film scores, maybe an EP, and a couple singles.

**So you guys are going on tour tomorrow? And how long are you guys going out for?**

**Lehner:** One month

**Are you psyched about that?**

**Lehner:** Yeah. I'm thinking that we're actually gonna have a real tour, because the record is going to be in stores, and there's going to be press for it. We've played all these places before but this is like our first real tour.

**Lavalle:** We're glad to have something new to tour on. This is our 11<sup>th</sup> time out, and we've done probably five tours on each thing we've put out.

**Lehner:** We're not used to our name or picture in every weekly paper. We're not used to people actually picking up the record before they see us. We're used to people usually buying the record at the show. But now we're gonna go out and people are gonna already have it. I think it's gonna be way better.

**Lavalle:** We're not used to signing autographs. There's a lot of that. Tonight this girl from Urban Outfitters came out because we're on rotation all day in all of those stores. It's good exposure. This girl heard us at Urban Outfitters and got a CD and said, "oh I want you guys to sign it." She thought we were hot shit since she heard us in Urban Outfitters.

**Lehner:** Autographs mark personal interaction. I don't remember every person I talk to at a show but if they remember it that's great.

**Any final words?**

**Lehner:** I would tell everybody to go outside of their normal listening waves and listen to the new record in

a different context. Whether that's taking a walk with headphones, or anything. It's meant to be listened to in a different way because there's a lot of subtleties in it. Listen when you're free of distractions with your eyes closed. To get the full meaning you have to listen to it in a different way.

**Laff:** If I'm listening to something and I actually like it, then I'll give it a listen when I'm driving. Those kinds of interactions are more important than just kind of sitting there on the couch listening to music. All sounds are background music, everything. It's all music so it should be listened to because you hear it all day long anyway.


**Tristeza can be contacted at [tristeza@hotmail.com](mailto:tristeza@hotmail.com)**

**Photos by Mr. Jonah Bayer**

**"It's not about us alienating, I think it's just that people don't know how to deal with it. They're not ready for us. They're the ones who are alienated."**





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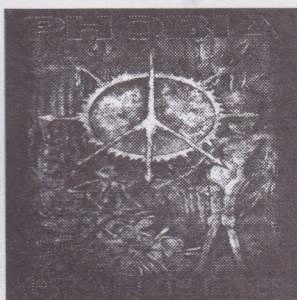
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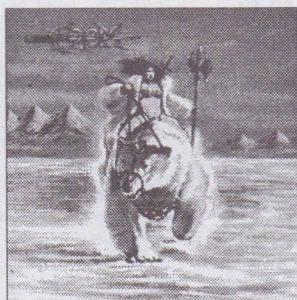
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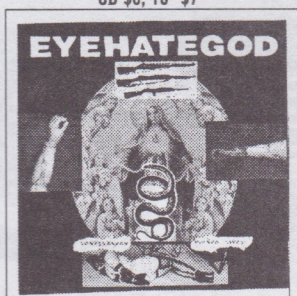
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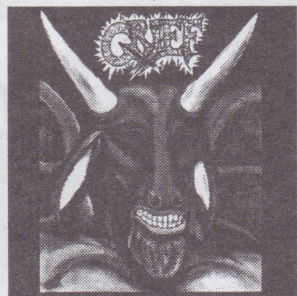
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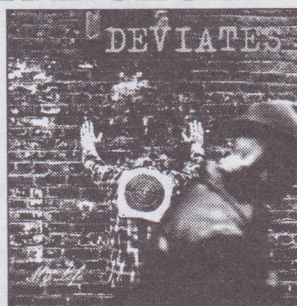


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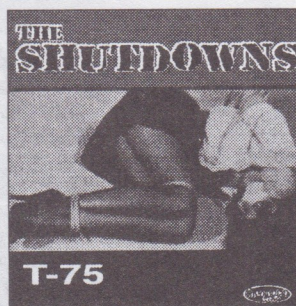
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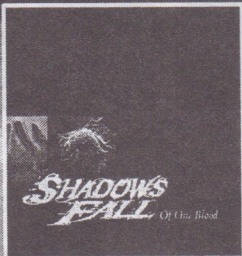
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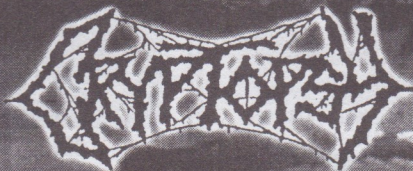
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## SHADOWS FALL



### Of One Blood

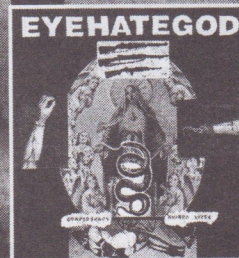
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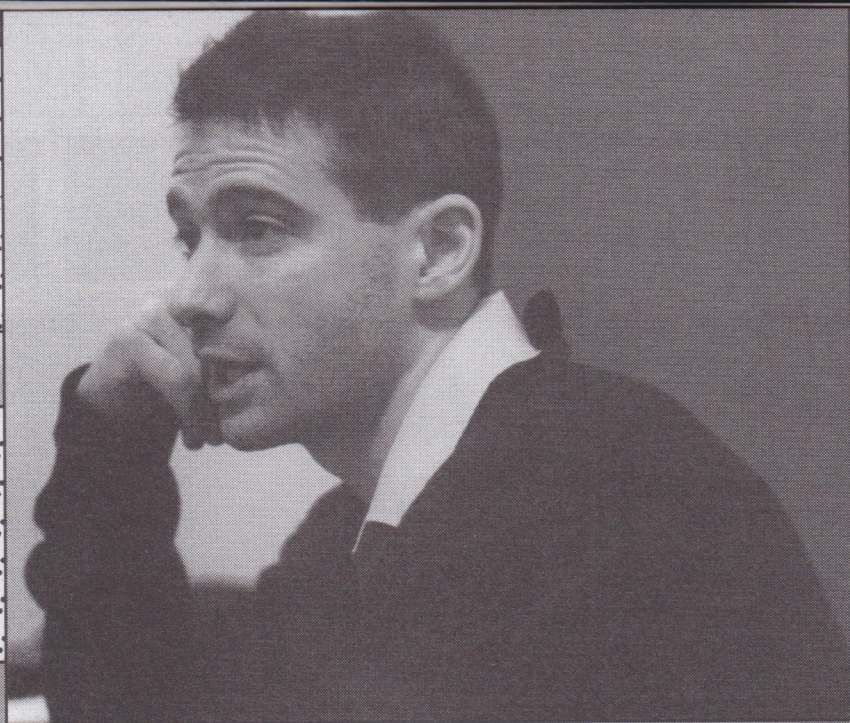
# BS 2000

Interview by Ross

Photos by Lauren Becker







"Oh my fucking God, my brother is going to interview Adrock!" my sister screamed after I told her. Sure I was excited, but coming from more of an underground punk than an MTV background I wasn't nearly as excited as my sister. But, I was told that this wasn't to be a Beastie Boys interview, as the interview was not intended to promote the B-Boys, but rather a side-project Adrock has with a guy from Southern California named Amery "Awol" Smith. I was a bit nervous, I mean, it's one thing to interview Elliott Smith, but here I was going to interview a member of a band that has been touring the world and selling millions of records for the past two decades. I mean, the guy opened for Madonna for crying out loud. The thought of getting to pick the mind of a guy who played with the Bad Brains and Reagan Youth in the early days of NY hardcore really appealed to me. Then I found out that Adrock's partner-in-crime, Awol, played drums on the first Suicidal Tendencies record-- and is also the Beastie Boys' tour drummer-- and I was hooked lock stock and barrel. Before the interview I quickly called my dear friend Lauren about taking pictures, which she happily agreed to (thanks Lauren!) And, she was even more nervous than I was. Now that the interview is long over, people ask me what Adrock and Awol were like. I think they expected me to say something quaint, like, "they're so down to earth and friendly and we're best pals now." I can't say that exactly, because they were a bit too charming and confident for me to settle right in. However, once the ball got rolling, I found out that fame and fanfare-- and life with Kathleen Hannah-- doesn't make people into assholes. They were relatively down-to-earth guys, all things considered, they were super nice, super supportive, and actually pretty chill. Anyways, I decided early on that if the interview was to go as planned I couldn't focus on hip-hop or electronic music, which I thought these two guys would be into, but rather on punk. I am happy to report that even though they may be experienced and famous and all that jazz, they really haven't lost touch with their roots.

Okay guys, I don't know much about hip-hop and I don't know much about electronic music, so is it cool if we talk about punk? (laughter)

**Awol:** Well, actually when I'm back in Southern California where I live pretty much all I listen to is punk and hardcore. So, I'm game.

**How about you?**

**Adrock:** I don't really listen to much new music of any style. I mostly listen

to '70s reggae records, so pretty much whatever we talk about I won't know much about.

**Was that the type of stuff you listened to as a teenager?**

**Adrock:** Well yeah. I'm pretty much stuck in the past.

**It just seems that whenever I interview people older than 25 they're all still listening to the stuff they listened to when they were 16.**

**Adrock:** How old are you?

I'm 23.

**Adrock:** Well, things happen to you when you reach a certain age. You know, you start losing your hair and your teeth and your mind and you try to hold onto those days before all that stuff happened to you.

**What age did it hit you at?**

**Adrock:** Um, 24.

**Awol:** Dude, what are you telling him? That as soon as he leaves this interview his hair is going to fall out? (laughter)

**Adrock:** All I'm saying is that you like to keep pieces of your youth through music.

**Awol:** I don't necessarily listen to the same stuff I listened to as a kid because there's so much out there and I see no reason to limit myself to just what was around when I first became interested in music. Music keeps growing and developing, why can't you too? You don't have to just listen to what you are used to.

**Cool. Well, the first question I have for you guys is why are you approaching small magazines like my own as opposed to Rolling Stone or Spin?**

**Adrock:** Just 'cause. We don't want this to be the little Beastie Boys side-project. We want people to listen to our lyrics and our music and hear what we have to say as a group as opposed to all these other strings attached. I guess we want to reach out. We just want people to come and see us but not have any preconceived ideas of what we do or should sound like.

**Awol:** The passion and the time and the energy you go through in making something like this [holds up a copy of Law of Inertia] is the same type of passion and energy we went through in making our record. It's not like it's a Beastie Boys project, it's on a different level. We're trying to reach different kids than Rolling Stone hits. Fanzines hit a different type of kid than those big magazines. But still, look at this thing, this is not a small cut-and-paste deal. You did not throw





this thing together. But at the same time you didn't rush to put it out 'cause you had another issue to put out a few weeks later. It's that kind of personal investment that we're going for.

**What I mean is, are you guys trying to go for more of an underground vibe with the new BS2000 record as opposed to the MTV pop-culture saturation thing?**

**Adrock:** Yes and no. We're not really that concerned with who shows up, if you know what I mean. I think we both feel that we just want people to show up and we want them to support us because they like what we're doing, not because they like the Beastie Boys. We're not trying to blow up, we just want to start out as a band.

**I think the new record sounds a lot like Le Tigre, and I know that you, Adam, are living with Kathleen from Le Tigre. I was wondering if she helped you guys out on this at all?**

**Adrock:** Yeah she helped us out a bit. But it was more from us hanging out with the Le Tigre girls and not really them showing us what to do or tracking the record for us.

**Awol:** We wrote and, with the exception of the mixing process, completely engineered this thing ourselves.

**So this is pretty DIY then? At least compared to some of the other stuff you've worked on.**

**Adrock:** Everything both of us have ever worked on—I think—has been completely us or the people in whatever band we were in at the moment. Except for a couple of years in the '80s, the Beastie Boys is completely DIY. I don't know what people think, but when the Beastie Boys record it is 3 guys and a few friends who happen to know music go into a basement for a few months. It's never been with huge producers or anything like that.

**Awol:** And, all the stuff I've worked on has been the same deal. With this record almost everything that could have been done was done by us. And I don't think either of us would have wanted it any other way. It was totally, "hey man, let's get together and write some songs."

**Adrock:** That's the only way real music can be made I think. I have never done it where someone says, "okay, here's this much money and this much time, you better have a hit album ready before you run out of one of these variables."

**Awol:** It seems that too often these days there are the same groups that all want to work with the same producers to achieve a certain sound. We feel in all our work that the only way to make music we really really care

about is if we do it by ourselves.

**I imagine you mean Ross Robinson.**

**Awol:** Actually that's exactly the guy I'm referring to. He did the At the Drive-in stuff. Everybody wants to sound like that.

**Adrock:** Believe me we have no interest in sounding like Limp Bizkit or Korn.

**But sounding like At the Drive-in wouldn't be too bad at all.**

**Awol:** I like that band, and we respect their work ethic but want to make music for the sake of having fun, not for the sake of selling lots of records based on what other bands have already done.

**So do you guys follow what's happening in underground music at all these days? I would think you wouldn't.**

**Adrock:** As I said, if it's '70s reggae then I'm down. If not, it's not that I don't like it, but I probably am just more into what came before. I went into a techno store a few years ago and I didn't know one record in the whole store. It was weird for me because I have a lot of records and I thought to myself how out of it I was.

**Awol:** I don't really listen to techno or hip-hop either, like you said before, but when I go into a store with a good selection of punk I generally know my way around.

**Why after all these years are you still interested in punk rock?**

**Awol:** I guess I still like the energy and passion that kids have in that scene. That's not to say that they don't have that kind of passion in other scenes like the '70s reggae scene (laughter) but punk is what I know and punk is I guess the mentality I've had for all the years I've been into music. It's like, once I tasted that first sip I never forgot its taste.

**Do you guys mind the fact that your fanbase may be much younger than you?**

**Awol:** Well even if the crowd of kids at the punk shows I go to is a bit younger I still really enjoy going to, say, punk rock shows. I enjoy the energy. I think that even though I may be getting older music is a great way to keep in touch with what's cool and still feel young since, yes, a lot of the people who listen to our stuff and the stuff I listen to may be half my age. I don't care if that's at a sold-out Roseland show or in front of five kids, I like to play music and that's it. I don't really care how old the people watching are.

**Would you guys would rather be playing to kids from, like ages sixteen to twenty as opposed to people in their mid-thirties?**

**Awol:** I'm not going to say that. I like playing to everybody. That doesn't





matter, does it?

**Adrock:** Grown-ups are hip. You try to play to people who are going to care about what you do and maybe listen to what you say. It gets hard because older people are more set in their ways. We're all set in our ways, not just older people. There are lots of bands that don't try to connect to the people they're playing for, they try to [connect] with the people they want to play for. We try to connect period. It doesn't matter if people are on the same wavelength as us in terms of how old they are. We want them to reach out to us like we're reaching out to them. That's all we care about.

**Awol:** It doesn't matter if they're sixteen or twenty-five.

**Adrock:** We don't want to play for hardcore kids who say, "I don't understand this so I'm not going to listen to it." Just like we don't want to play for hip-hop kids who feel the same way.

**Awol:** Yet, there are going to be hip-hop or hardcore kids who are open-minded and into trying stuff that may not be from where we or they are originally coming from. Those are the people that we do it for.

**If you only listen to hardcore or hip-hop that's fucking boring.**

**Awol:** Yeah.

**Adrock:** But, that's a lot of people too. Some people get into the mind frame of "this is my life, this is what I want to focus on" and I understand that. That's cool to me. But, maybe we can break down some of those barriers with BS2000.

**Now, what do you guys do when music isn't fun anymore?**

**Adrock:** I have no idea.

**Awol:** I don't know either. Music has been not fun in the past. You can reinvent yourself and do different things. There is nothing that says "you have to play this kind of music, or do this kind of thing." I guess when the music I'm playing now isn't fun anymore I try to surprise myself and totally switch gears. That's the best part about electronic music, in that you don't have to be limited to what instruments or styles you know how to play. You can try something totally different with computers or samplers.

**And, if I'm correct your first record was totally done on a drum machine. That stuff was much more lo-tech than what you're doing now.**

**Adrock:** Sort of, the stuff we did was on a sampler. We did stuff with 4-tracks and 8-tracks. It sounds good to me so I don't know if lo-fi or lo-tech means anything. I listened to the Bad Brains first tape when it came out and it's like you'd never think—think of your favorite records:

when you first heard some of that stuff it was the best sounding shit you ever heard and yeah I guess by technical standards that shit is lo-tech. It's quality shit and you'd never be like, "that shit is lo-tech." You'd think it's fucking amazing. All of that stuff I listened to when I was a kid isn't lo-fi, well yeah it's lo-fi, but who cares since it's fucking amazing. Like the Slits record is lo-fi but who gives a shit 'cause it's not about the recording it's about the music. It doesn't matter to me if they recorded on an 8-billion track studio or in a basement. That shit is amazing!

**Awol:** Well put.

**And, you listen to those first few Black Flag recordings and they fucking suck.**

**Awol:** But the vibe is there and it makes it amazing shit!

**Adrock:** I'll take the way any of that stuff sounds over any of this new shit. I don't care if it's At the Drive-in or Limp Bizkit. Any of that shit just sucks in comparison. It doesn't matter to me, I just want to hear Polly Styrie's voice.

**Awol:** Those bands from the early days of punk weren't doing what they were because the label was telling them what to do or because they wanted to be famous and rich. They were singing those songs because they had to do it to survive. What I wonder when I hear a lot of the newer bands is what the label or the producer wants? Is that actually what those bands heard in their heads when they wrote those songs? Or, is that what some dude hired by the record company to craft a hit record heard in his head?

**Adrock:** That comes through with a lot of different music. Hip-hop is like that. Hip-hop is basement music. Get a Radio Shack mike and a cassette deck and you make your own music. And to pay someone X amount of dollars to make something for you, I don't get that shit. Unless you're really focused on your words and the music is secondary, then that shit don't mean nothing to me. Not everyone has to be a musician. You don't have to be a guitar player to be a musician.

**But isn't that what punk is about? Didn't bands from your day imply that you don't need to be an amazing musician to make amazing music?**

**Adrock:** That's what it should be about.

**Awol:** That's sometimes where the desperation and feeling comes from, that they're trying so hard to make music and they aren't necessarily recording engineers or amazingly technical drummers. Those people just feel something so bad and have something to say. With BS2000 we didn't want to go be amazing keyboardists or drummers, we wanted to





make music that we felt.

**But, you two have been playing music for over 20 years. So, what you lack in technical ability you can make up for in having heard a lot and done a lot.**

**Adrock:** Yeah, we didn't know how to play keyboards but we taught ourselves how to do it.

**Awol:** Totally. I still don't know how to play the drums even after 20 years. I know my two beats that I learned in the hardcore and punk scenes and the rest is just luck and passion I guess.

**Adrock:** That's what I love about punk rock and hip-hop. If you can play in a club and after the show go up to someone you know who wrote a zine or magazine with you in it, you can know that they're learning with you and it's not two totally professional motherfuckers who can't get any better or don't want to get any better. You're both struggling to do what you do and have fun. When you're fourteen and you see H.R. up on stage that's another story, but you get the idea. (laughter)

**Awol:** I saw the Bad Brains in like '81 or '82 and it was a show with the Circle Jerks and Black Flag and when you're a kid and you see all that going on it's unreal.

**Is it true that the Beastie Boys were covering Reagan Youth songs for a while?**

**Adrock:** Yeah, we did a while ago.

**What was the reaction?**

**Awol:** Well, we were playing huge places.

**Adrock:** When we were Quasar [the previous incarnation of BS2000] we played at Coney Island High and we played a Reagan Youth song and a lot of kids knew what it was. People were into it. We did that just out of tribute to them. We used to be friends.

**Right, you guys played some of your first shows with them.**

**Adrock:** Yeah, we used to open shows together. Then Dave, their singer died, and we tried to keep their name alive.

**Forgive me for this but you guys seem to be more in touch with your punk roots then I would have thought. I would have thought you'd be way more into techno or hip-hop, and you seem to know nothing about techno. (laughter) Do people make that mistake often?**

**Adrock:** I think if you see someone in Rolling Stone you think you know what they're about. Even though I'm in Rolling Stone I think they're just in the party bubble. They don't know what's up. I'm sure people make that mistake about me all the time.

**Awol:** I saw Kill Your Idols at a club in Wilmington not too long ago and there were only like thirty kids there but it was still one of the best times I've ever had. It makes me so happy to know that type of shit still exists. They start a band and write songs and just go, they just do it. They're not making millions of dollars or even probably breaking even, but they're having fun and it was a great show. That's what they do.

**Adrock:** We were in Europe playing a show and we were doing an interview and the interviewer looked at me and I had Pee-Chees button on and she said, "how do you know about them?" I was like, "what do you mean?"

**I wouldn't think you would know who the Pee-Chees are. (laughter)**

**Adrock:** People look at me funny when I go see the Haggard.

**Awol:** People ask me why I still go to punk shows and I tell them, "this is the shit here. There are kids here fourteen and fifteen years old making music and keeping it alive. And the music they make is so much more intense and real than anything else out there. Why wouldn't I go to punk shows?" It's two generations after I was first doing it and it's still awesome.

**But, I've been into punk for around eight years now and even I'm getting sick of it. I'm getting sick of the same rip-off bands over and over again. I would think after all the time you've done it you would think it's stupid or cliché.**

**Adrock:** But, that's life. You come in and out of things.

**Awol:** That's what you do.

**Adrock:** I got into this and then I got into that. It doesn't mean I'm a loser or a poseur. It's just what you do. After a while I stopped going to hardcore matinees when the scene started going towards metal. Right at that particular time was when Run-DMC's first record was coming out and I was like, "yo, I just love this!" I started getting into rap, cause that was just about the time when we started buying records and sampling. So I got into other stuff. Then we used to hang out with the Bad Brains and they got us into all this reggae stuff.

**I'm really glad you guys say that 'cause I'm really getting jaded with the punk stuff.**

**Awol:** It happens. You remove yourself for a while and come back to it and realize how good it is.

**Adrock:** There's so much music out there that is different and great and also may be saying cool shit. If music is your thing [I nod], then there's a lot of art out there for you to see and hear.



# Hatchet

by Tim "no holds barred" Holden

Last month I turned 24. That means I better have 21 stitches before I'm 25.

It really makes perfect sense: I got 7 stitches at the age of 4, 14 stitches at 14 and now I need 21 stitches at 24.

It's not like birthday punches, every 10 years I'd have to increase my stitches by a factor of seven. Of course I could choose to disregard this cosmic ordinance. But why would I want to? I'd never pass up a chance to get a scar? Scars rock. They hold more memories than any tattoo, and if you have insurance, they're also way cheaper. We all remember that scene in *Jaws*, right? Quint and Richard Dreyfuss bonded over mere squiggles in their skin. Wouldn't you feel more connected to someone if they pointed to a line on their arm and said "thresher shark"?

My scar stories are the best-remembered and most recalled points in my life. Everyone who's known me for more than a week or has shared more than six beers has heard these stories. So, good readers, I'd like to share my first two stitches stories. This piece may seem a bit self-indulgent, but I've been writing to you for three years now, its due time you've met my scars.

## Age 4, 7 stitches. Small white line at top of forehead near hairline:

It was an afternoon in May. I was playing outside with my neighbor Ryan. We had just gotten tired of the swing and we were looking for something else to do. Ryan was 6 and could fully appreciate the beauty of breaking things. Luckily for Ryan, he had just found the means to satiate his budding lust for wanton destruction in a rusty hatchet. Later in life I would grow cautious thanks to countless safety filmstrips and *Highlights*' "Goofus and Galant", but there on my lawn in 1981 I was but a doe-eyed Jerry to Ryan's Tom.

Choking up on the handle and striking his best Reggie Jackson imitation, Ryan was eager to find his target. Knowing that chopping down a tree would take a while and maybe make my mom mad, he fixed his gaze on something that would quickly yield to a swift hack – the wooden steps to a defunct treehouse. Ryan took aim and with one mighty swing managed to miss the tree completely. Like a good little ball player, Ryan followed through with his swing and nailed me right in the forehead. Before I knew what happened Ryan was running away screaming "I killed Timmy". He fell down a few times on the way to my front door.

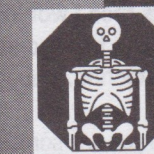
I didn't really feel anything. I only started to cry once I saw my shadow. I got to my feet and saw my silhouette – a black line ran from my head. The line was blood, I was bleeding. When you bleed, you cry. But being a good PBS viewer I knew that blood was very important to have. I stopped crying, lifted my head up and began to drink my own blood. It seemed like a good idea to keep the blood in you. It didn't taste half bad, kind of like the juice from a French dip sandwich.

Ryan came back with my sister (age 14) who was pretty calm even though she could see my skull. No kidding, she saw it. My brains weren't oozing though.

While we were waiting for Ryan's mom to drive us to the hospital, Ryan's brother, James showed up, inspired by all the gore. "Don't go anywhere!" he demanded. "I need to get this on tape". James (age 13) was then a budding news reporter who had just gotten a video camera. He was dying for material (he's now the evening anchor man at 1010WINS in New York.). I was really excited to be put on tape, but sadly James only caught the car peeling out of the driveway.

The loss of blood had subdued me and turned my green Osh-Kosh overalls purple. I was pretty chill until it came time for the stitches. My poor doctor. He was Korean and didn't know a lick of English, but was nice as anything. Maybe if he knew what "Fucker-Fuck", "Shit-Ass", and "Poop-Shit" meant he wouldn't have been so pleasant. I was so nervous on the gurney that my mom said it was O.K. to let fly with the curses. I think she was a little shocked at how far I flew.

When my smiling and oblivious doctor put the 7<sup>th</sup> stitch on my dirty little head, my stint as a potty-mouthed adult was over. I would have been upset had my mom not allowed me to choose anything I wanted for dinner. As my dear friends will tell you, I have the damndest time making decisions. So it was either pizza or spaghetti. My mom let me have both – it was a good day.





**Age 14, 14 stitches. 4 inch line half way down my back on the left side. Has some black hairs growing on it.**

It was a late May morning at Blind Brook Middle/High School. A few friends and I were hanging out in the hall near the assistant principal's office. My school was built in the early '70's by some real progressive hippie types. Most of the rooms had either three walls, or glass ones. This made for some pretty odd situations like watching the assistant principal chew out a student from the hallway. The victim that morning was my friend John's slutty girlfriend, Jill.

Poor Jill had the undisputed worst reputation in the building and the slut jokes were pouring out of us. The choicest lines came from Kevin (who would end up with her in the bushes by the soccer field that June). Just as Kevin shot a nasty line John walked by. Perfect timing, John had just grown into the role of protective guido boyfriend and was ready to defend his claim. Instead of going after Kevin, John slammed *me* against the wall. All I did was laugh, but I was 4 inches shorter than Kevin and considerably softer.

Since it was a play fight and I was a wimp I didn't put up much of a fight. John threw me against the concrete wall. He pulled me back and slammed me again – against a window. The sound of plate glass breaking is nothing like in the movies. There was a split-second thud, then an ear-wringing boom, then came the shattering glass sound. That came when the glasscicles fell all around me. Now I know how Marie Antoinette felt in the Guillotine. Although I think my shriek was more girlish than hers.

Being a nice guy, John pulled me back inside before anything landed on me. It took three seconds for the assistant principal to snatch John up. I acted like nothing happened. I didn't feel a damn thing, but my friends' faces proved me wrong. All anyone could say was "wow". Turns out I was bleeding like crazy. By the time Mrs. Garretto, the school nurse, came the back of my linen Gap shirt was soaking through.

Walking through the school with an open wound can make any 8<sup>th</sup>-grader feel like a badass. Every time an upper-class girl would shriek, I'd smile. By the time I made it to the nurses office I was low on blood but still managed to strut. Yeah, I was all smiles until Mrs. Garretto said I might have pierced my lung.

Within a half-hour I was stretched out on a gurney listening to a man vomit. The sound of vomit splashing on the E.R.'s floor made my mom and me laugh out loud. Since my lung wasn't pierced I had to take a number and wait to be sewn. To pass the time I trying to decipher which fluid was which simply by listening to the splash against the linoleum.

Turns out the leaky patient was HIV-positive and his doctor wanted to check out my gash before washing his hands. The doctor was really pushy and looked like Rip Taylor, so I was scared. It was my mom who had a problem with the whole HIV thing. So whom did we get to replace him? A kindly Korean doctor with a limited English vocabulary who had just finished surgery upstairs. His English was so that I couldn't get away with cursing anymore; instead I listened to his stories about socks. "When, I was boy, I sewed holes in my socks. That's why I make good stitches now." Fascinating stuff. I asked if he remembered me from before, he said he did. I didn't press the issue and ask if he ever found out what "Poop-Shit" meant.

So those are my scars. What you just read were the bare bones, honest to God versions. Face to face I tend to embellish the plate glass story. After a few beers the story gets a whole lot more fun. Sometimes I even have props. I still show off the linen shirt, it has a nice 4-inch sliver in the back. I can't find the stained Osh-Kosh though. Next to my old blanky and teddy bear, blood stained XS overalls would've been a cute little memento.

Thanks to scars I'll always have a story to tell a new friend or first date. Girls like the 4-year-old scar story better. I've never gotten tired of telling these stories, but the time has come for a new one. 21 stitches. It's going to be good story. But it has to be the result of an accident. Not all scars are cool. Acne scars totally suck. I doubt Edward James Almos has a good story to tell.

No one wants to hear a creepy story of a self-inflicted wound either. "Hey baby, want to hear about the time I sliced my arm simply because I turned 24?" That line seldom works. It can't be from surgery either. Goiter and appendix removal does not make for good copy. My stitches have to come from a bar fight, a goofy accident or from a guest spot on MTV's Jackass. Hopefully a year from now I'll be able to point to my shoulder and say "petting zoo".



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# Cave-in

by Ross



Cave-in is one of those bands that remains an enigma in more ways than one. On virtually every recording they've ever made they completely reinvent themselves from the last. While one might call their first collection on CD format, "Beyond Hypothermia," screamo, their first true full-length, "Until Your Heart Stops," was some of the most pummeling metal-hardcore I've ever heard. About a year and a half ago I got their "Creative Eclipses" EP in the mail and was totally shocked and amazed by the variation on that release. Plus, its difference from their earlier stuff was astounding. Honestly, I liked the Earth-esque song there, but the acoustic song may have been a bit much. I really wasn't ready for that release and I don't think the rest of their fans were either. After the release of their newest record, the aptly titled "Jupiter," I felt the need to talk to Cave-in's most visible member, Steven Brodsky, and ask him about his musical interests, ideas, and the future of his band. What I found is a guy who is as soft-spoken as he is creative. Although one really can't tell from this interview (Steven's actually pretty shy), but getting Steven to really open up is a chore. But, it is a chore I was perfectly willing to undertake.

So, I guess the question on everyone's mind is why did you guys decide to go from being one of the best metal-hardcore bands in the world to being almost a prog-rock band.

Yes, apparently that is the question on everyone's mind. (laughter)

**Why? Has everyone been asking you that question?**

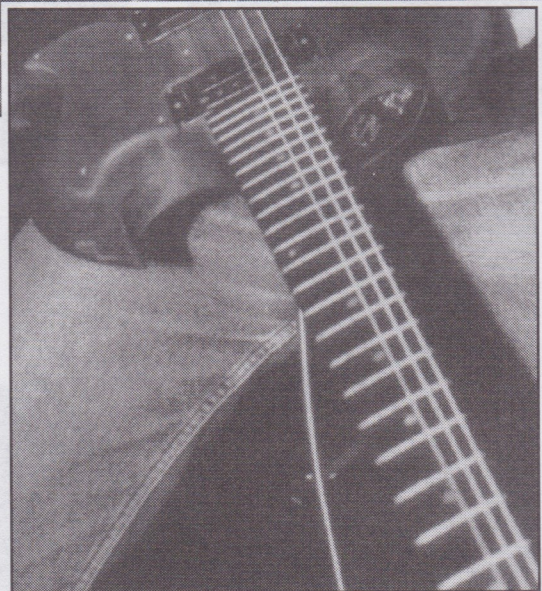
Of course, people do that, especially in the hardcore scene. That's why it's so hard to change your sound and still be considered relevant and interesting. A lot of people think we changed quickly—like, we went from being a straight-up metal band to whatever the hell it is we are now overnight. The fact is, we really haven't been writing or playing metal as it is commonly thought of for some time now. I still listen to metal, and I probably will always listen to some, but for a long time now bands like Led Zeppelin have been far more interesting to me than Slayer.

**Yeah, I saw your cover of "Dazed and Confused."**

We've been doing that one for a while now, and people seem to like it. But, it's funny in hardcore-- you suddenly decide you don't want to play a million miles an hour or scream your head off and people label you as a sell-out. By the way, the term sell-out has absolutely no meaning anymore. It refers to anyone these days that tries something new. But, what I've been telling kids and zines ever since the last EP came out ["Creative Eclipses"], is that I don't want people to pigeon-hole us and I always want to make my music more interesting and creative. Potentially I have no problem pushing the boundaries of what Cave-in is or what I put into playing guitar.

**But, do you really find it so odd that people are confused about your new sound? I mean, it wasn't like you guys were playing watered down metal on the "Until Your Heart Stops" album. That stuff was heavy!**

No, I totally understand it. It's like with Failure. They were a band that was playing amazingly crazy shit, and then suddenly they get signed to a major and it was almost as if they tried to lighten their stuff to make it more palatable to a wider audience. We're not trying to do that at all. We're still on an indie label and we still play with indie bands, and we're happy to keep doing that. If it paid the bills that would always be an added plus. (laughter) But, I understand

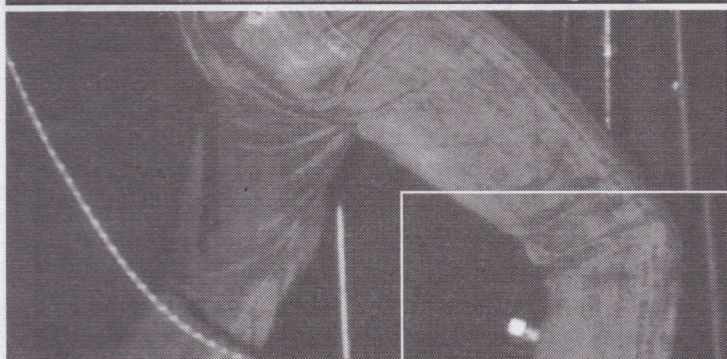
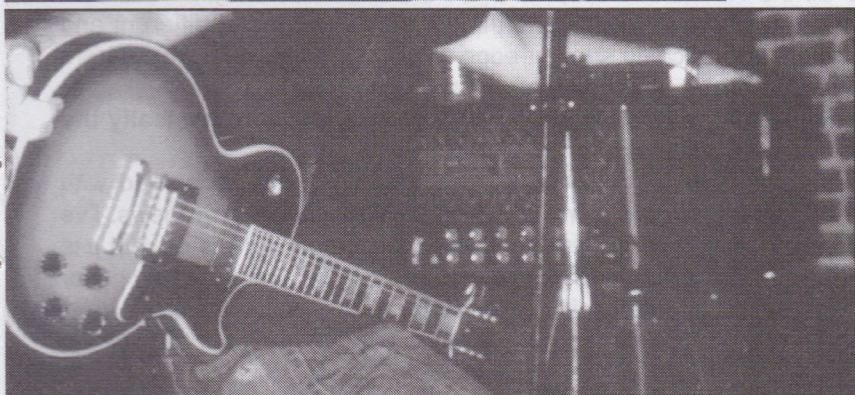


that most bands don't just go from playing hardcore to rock right away. If suddenly Radiohead started playing metal I imagine kids would say much the same thing as we're doing now.

**I've actually noticed a Radiohead vibe in your sound. It's not that you're playing exactly like them, 'cause you're not at all, but definitely the off-kilter scales and harmonies are something that they may have brought in vogue.**

And they're a great band. That's exactly it, I find Radiohead to be far more interesting these days than most of the metal I listened to as a kid. And, I'm not a kid anymore. I'm in my twenties and it's getting hard for me to go up there on stage every night and scream my head off. I really don't know how





most hardcore bands do it: they get up there night after night on tour and play like the fucking world is coming to an end. Maybe some people can do it, but we would have shows where I literally couldn't think straight because my head was hurting so much from screaming. At the very least I can walk in a straight line after I play now. (laughter)

**Do you find metal childish? I don't mean that in a patronizing way, because I think it may be a valid idea that metal is for kids who haven't found the joys of soft music and hard music yet.**

No, I don't find metal childish at all. As I said, I still like the stuff. There are some metal bands, like Dillinger, who I find to be incredibly innovative and creative. Right now I'm more focused on seeing what kind of crazy sounds I can get out of my guitar, or actually seeing if I can hold a melody when I sing, than see how many palm mutes I can pull off in a bar of music. Metal is not childish at all. I'm sure there are older people out there that love hard music when they go to see a show, but also know how to take it easy at night and throw on softer stuff. It's not like we're playing softer now. If anything we're just as loud. The only difference now is that when we play live today people can actually understand what I'm playing as opposed to Adam [Cave-in's other guitarist]. Plus they finally realized that I'm singing actual words

instead of just screaming gibberish.

**Do you think there are types of metal that may be more mature or more along the lines of what you're doing now?**

Yeah, I think the stuff that Neurosis has done might be in the same vein as modern day Cave-in. It's intelligent and creative and interesting and heavy as fuck.

**So, after you've already made one huge switch in sound, where does Cave-in go from here?**

I'm not really sure. That's sort of the thing I like about the band. People really didn't expect that acoustic song on the EP, and I think "Jupiter" threw them for a loop even more, so who knows where we'll take it. I mean, after our first record—which seems like an eternity ago in terms of how far we've progressed and changed—we didn't follow that up with a carbon copy. And our new stuff is like the Xerox machine was broken when you compare it to "Beyond Hypothermia."

As I said, I'm happy to keep changing and reinventing Cave-in, but that's not the primary focus. I guess my musical mission revolves around trying to make real all the weird sounds I have going through my head. If it's metal then it's metal, if it's prog-rock or whatever you call it then so be it.

**Does it bother you that many of your old fans may not like you anymore because you changed? It's real easy for a band to take their band in a different direction and then tell the world that they are sad their old fans don't like them anymore. But, you have to wonder if some bands actually care that their old fans aren't with them anymore. What's your stance?**

No, it does bother me. I think we've been fortunate in our situation in that a lot of the original Cave-in fans, who were our friends, were the same age as us when we started. We were really young and so were they, so when we grew up so did they. It's not like we started when we were all 22 and we were playing to 15 year-olds. I think a lot of our true fans have stayed on and realized that there's more to punk and hardcore than hammering your guitar with distortion and power chords. But, it is sad to me that when we play around the country, often with hardcore bands, we get heckled because we don't really fit in as we once did. I'm not sure if it's sad to me because they haven't realized that music isn't just Metallica, or whether I'm upset because they just didn't even really give us a chance.

**I know, I've seen you up there on stage. If anything, that song "Big Riff" is just as powerful as anything off your first two records. It still has the amazing guitar work you're known for but in this case the mood is different.**

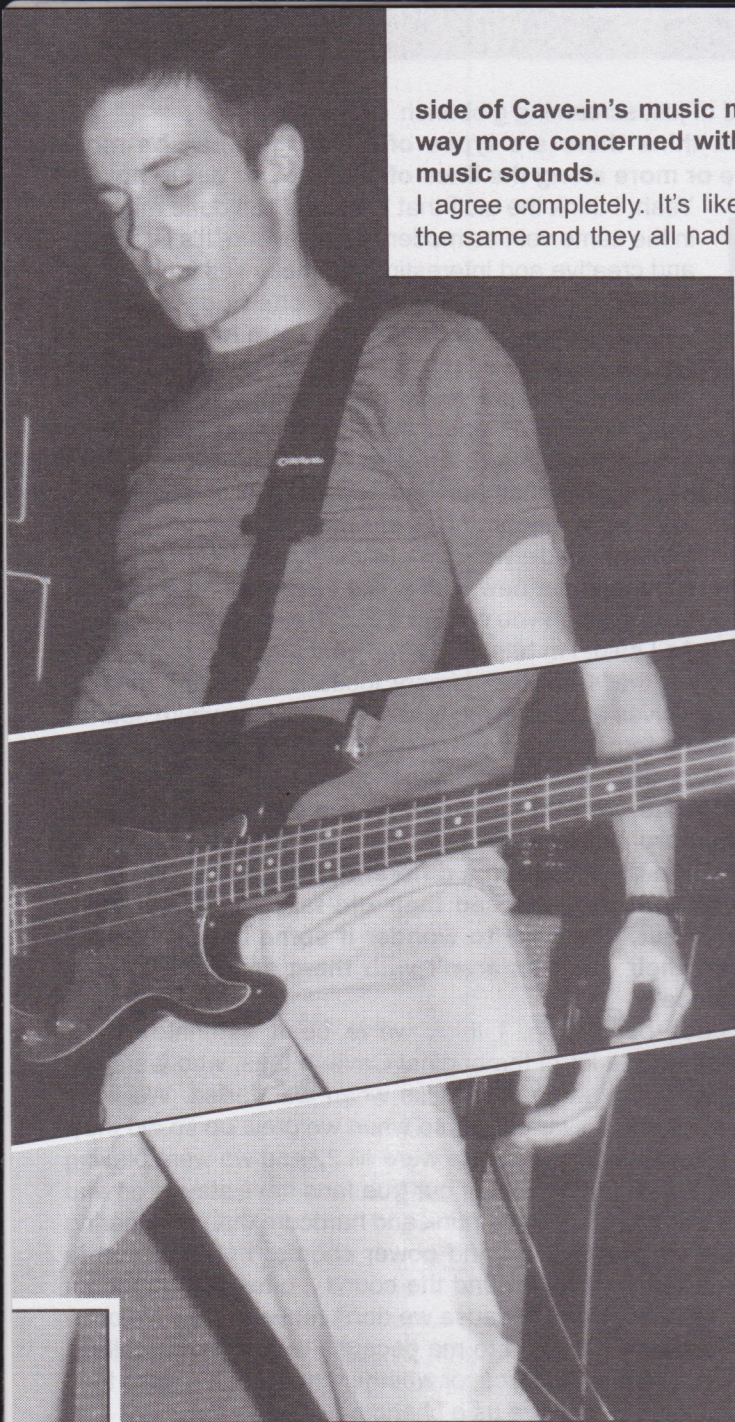
Right, and I don't think that even though the mood is different that that means we're still not angry or that we don't love to rock out. Instead, I think it just means we're expanding. The good part is that I think we're seeing some new types of people at our shows. While we expand our sound to new directions I think we may be picking up new fans that aren't into the metal stuff, you know? I think we always appealed to the indie kids who also like harder music but now I think we may be getting some more mainstream kids as well, which is cool by me.

**Who do you see as your contemporaries these day? Neurosis?**

No, not really Neurosis. I think bands like Eulcid and Isis are thinking along the same lines as we are. Trying to paint pictures and scenes with sound.

**So does that mean you're more concerned with the aesthetic**





side of Cave-in's music more than, say, a message? I think typical hardcore bands are way more concerned with some semblance of a message than they are with how their music sounds.

I agree completely. It's like all the NY hardcore bands from the late-'80s. They all sounded the same and they all had the same message. It's one thing if they all sounded different and

were approaching straight-edge or unity or whatever from different perspectives. But they really weren't.

**Well, that may be because all those bands were basically the same 12 guys in every band.**

True. (laughter) With Cave-in I think I am more concerned with focusing on how the music sounds than preaching my views. I've never been a very outspoken person as far as politics go, but it is so interesting to me to see what happens to the sound of my guitar when I start fucking with it. You know?

**Oh totally. Like those ray-guns you use. Where did they come from?**

Some store in Boston. I'm not sure how we found out that they make your guitar sound really weird but it's a real crowd pleaser at the least.

**When you first started doing it were people like, "is that a ray gun?" and then they started throwing bottles or something?**

Well, we started using them when we were still playing metal so I think no one really picked up on it at first. They've become a mainstay just because the sound is so unique. I could easily see

us switching to bananas if I thought they made

a cool sound too.

**So you're not attached to the ray guns then?**

Not really, but I always said that ray guns make the coolest noises.

**No doubt. Steven, have you started thinking about what comes next for Cave-in as far as the level the band is at?**

Are you talking about switching to a major label?

**Not necessarily, I mean I'm not sure if the Limp Bizkit fans of the world are ready for you.**

I'm not sure. I think that the mainstream took to bands like Tool or A Perfect Circle or Led Zeppelin, why wouldn't they be into us?

**Well, Led Zeppelin were never that popular during their existence.**

Yeah, but look at them now. Geez, if suddenly "Big Riff" starts becoming the song played at every high school dance in the country then I think we'll be all right. (much laughter) But, I think you're right. I think "Jupiter" is a long-shot for MTV. But, as I said, I'm not concerned with pleasing anyone. I'd like people to like us, and I'd like people in indie rock—where the most creative music is obviously made—to be into our stuff. If "Ok Computer" sells 10 million records then I think there's hope for a band like us. But, I don't think it's out of the question. Of course, I'm not going to tailor our sound to be radio-friendly, but I would be psyched to be there.

**What do you do now?**

You mean other than listen to the music in my head? (laughter)

**Yeah, other than Cave-in and your schizophrenia?** (laughter)

I answer phones at a hotel.

**How is that gig?**

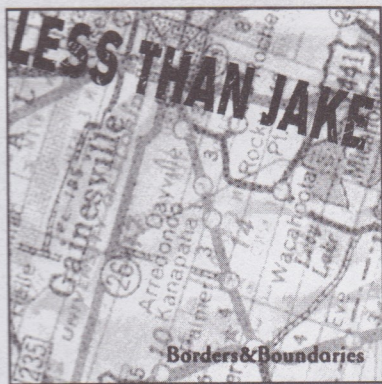
Let's put it this way, when I'm answering phones all I want to do is be up there on stage playing music.

**I could have guessed that. You seem like the type of guy whose life literally revolves around music.**

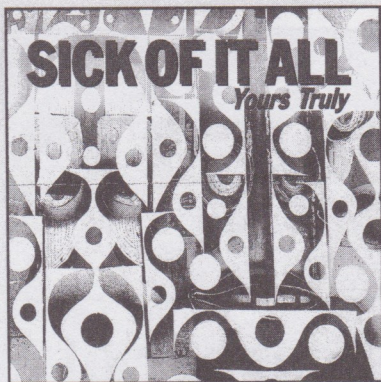
Maybe. I don't expect much, nor do I want much, but making a living off playing music wouldn't be the worst way to go through life.

**Photos by Ross and Jerry Guzman**

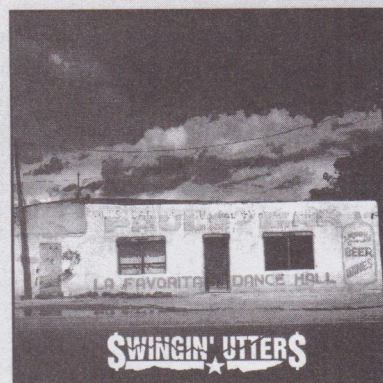




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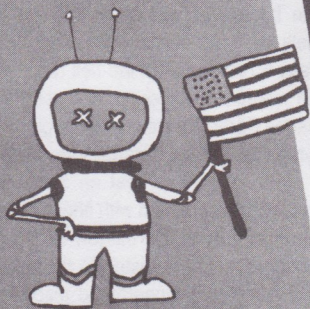


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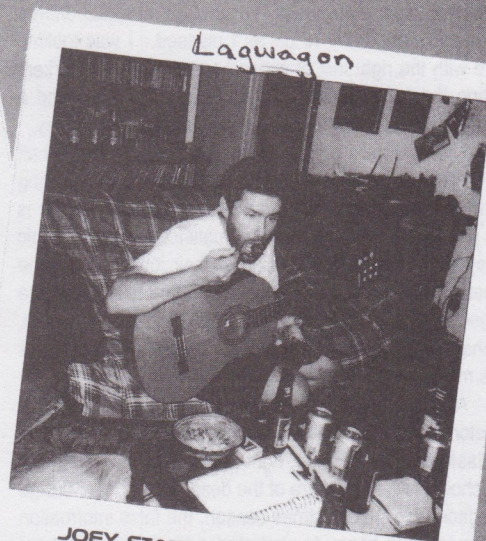
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# Infiltrating the

## The brief career of Starbucks partner

In Greek mythology, the Song of the Sirens belongs to a group of women living on a tiny island whose beautiful voices lured passing sailors to their death. Enchanted, they faced the unfortunate options of either drowning or being smashed against the rocks. In modern times, the Song of the Siren has updated itself for the urban landscape. Travelers constantly pass the smiling green and white Siren in every Starbucks logo, calling them into the softly lit, jazz-muzacked, grandé latté comforts held within. Each visit brings one dangerously closer to drowning in a sea of corporate conformity.

For the purposes of this article, I have allowed the Siren's song a chance to work its magic upon me and become what I once feared most, a Starbucks employee.

Walking around the Boston streets on a soggy carpet of fallen leaves, I find myself in search of the right island to sacrifice myself. The first Starbucks I visit is just north of Boston, over the Charles River, near the Harvard University campus. I had been informed of a Starbucks in the vicinity supposedly in great turmoil; the combination of a managerial staff who no longer gave a fuck and an equally wacked-out clientele offered hope of unrestricted liberty to do as I pleased. I was looking for a store with the right mix of college-age crowds, co-workers representing the full spectrum of Starbucks employees, and a manager I wouldn't feel too bad about making very, very angry.

I come across two Starbucks (of the four within a half mile of Harvard Square), but one is filled with boring looking people who take Starbucks way too seriously and the other is run by a group of women who's only distinctive characteristic is that they vary in obesity according to their job. The college student behind the register is a little soft around the edges, the middle aged woman working the coffee bar is pleasantly plump, and if aliens were to invade earth and eat the fat people first, this Starbucks manager would be one of the first to go.

After visiting about ten (of the forty-three Starbucks in the Boston area) I find the Starbucks I have been searching for, 147 Massachusetts Avenue, right across the street from the Berklee School of Music. Aware of the desperate labor shortage Starbucks faced for the Christmas season, the false information that I was more than happy to work during the holidays got me hired 15 minutes after walking in the door. My newly acquired manager, Robin, was overjoyed to find an employee willing to be one of the three people working the holiday season.

"The beginning of my learning journey" (in Starbucks-Speak) began with a bunch of paperwork, pamphlets on sexual

harassment ("Jim receives a promotion and Sally gives him a hug. Is this sexual harassment?"), and various "learning modules" to consult. The next day, after everything was signed and dated, I officially became Starbucks partner number 1009306.

### Work

My first impression of working in the store was not the total disgust I had imagined, but the realization that people who work at Starbucks are not mindless drones (at least most of them) and there was nothing overwhelmingly evil about the place. With few exceptions (usually coming from the higher-ups), my co-workers were interesting, friendly, and demonstrated none of the jerky movements or blank expressions associated with the animatronic robots I had expected to find.

Many of the people I worked with didn't really like Starbucks, but were left with very few options if they wanted to work at a coffee shop. It has become common practice for Starbucks to open multiple stores in the same neighborhood of existing coffee shops, offering landlords double or triple the rent a smaller coffee shop is paying, and for nobody to cause much of a fuss. Starbucks has taken over the coffee shop business like B.O. at a Phish concert; extremely unpleasant at first, but over time fades into the background even though it is getting stronger. Starbucks' business plan has followed a similar path of an unpleasant beginning (the mass closure of independent coffee shops), followed by a general acceptance that Starbucks is doing the right thing to put a store on every street corner and dominate the market.

In my first couple days, I hate to admit it, but working at Starbucks was kind of fun. They didn't trust me to do anything other than pour coffee and make Frappachinos, so I watched the other baristas frantically pump out Gingerbread Lattés and baffled customers struggle to grasp the concept that "Tall" meant small. Cutting short any warm fuzzy feelings I may have had were the

creepy elements that underlie anything Starbucks. Reminders that this is no Mom & Pop coffee shop, but a major multinational corporation (and one of the 25 most recognizable brands in the world) were impossible to ignore. After each shift, I put the money I had accumulated into a little plastic bag with a Starbucks logo on it and dropped it into a safe. With each heavy metallic bang of the hatch, I was doing my part to fund the gentrification of popular culture.

### The Starbucks Christmas Meeting:

Beneath my Starbucks is a basement where stockpiles of supplies are kept next to a lounge/conference room. Because of the furnace, which one "partner" told me was meant to "roast the bad Jewish customers," the basement temperature usually hovers around 95 to 100 degrees. The day of our meeting, it is sauna-esque and approaching the triple digits. I can taste human sweat in the air. I enter the room late because I was busy with the safe, and it feels like I am walking into a high school lecture class 5 minutes after the bell rang. In this case, the material being covered is not the year of the Magna Carta, but the number of pumps of caramel syrup in a Grande Caramel Macchiato.

I take a seat on a milk crate in the back of the room filled with fifteen other Starbucks "partners" packed into this low-ceiling, stifling room brought together to listen to the manager speak of a "recall" on gingerbread biscottis due to an irregular smell. From my vantagepoint, I see my manager in front of Starbucks advertisements transform from her usual diminutive nature into the clips I have seen of Mussolini on the History Channel pontificating in front of political banners, except the ideology has been very slightly altered from fascism to "extreme capitalism."

The topic of the meeting covers the new Christmas products, from gift bags of "laser ground coffee," to the 12th installment in the "Barista Bear" genealogy, an oversized beanie



# Evil Empire:

#1009306

baby for the Starbucks set. The manger informs us that the original Barista Bear "sells for \$300 on eBay."

The highlight of the meeting is the demonstration of the Utopia brewer, a clear plastic contraption that looks like a lopsided hourglass, representing the pinnacle of Starbucks coffee-brewing technology. For the machine to operate, an outlet has to be freed, sacrificing the fan that had been feebly circulating hot air around the room. An eerie silence descends as we sit around the table and wait for water to boil. The room grows hotter and the air becomes thick with stagnant exhalation. Tension builds as bubbles materialize on the bottom of the brewer. A couple jokes are made about "a watched pot never boiling," but in general there is total silence, not even an electric hum in the background. The water begins to boil and filters from the lower chamber, through the coffee grinds, to the upper chamber. Murmurs of excitement flutter through the room. When the coffee/water mixture erupts into a full boil there is cheering and whistling, as the brewed coffee filters back down, chants of "Go! Go! Go!" are heard, squealing follows as the last spurt of coffee returns triumphantly to the lower chamber.

The meeting concludes on a weird sort of game show note as the information given during the meeting is regurgitated back to the manager with prizes handed out in reward. The varying levels of enthusiasm from my fellow partners reinforces what I came to realize in my first few days of Starbucks employment, there seems to be a split between those who are down with the Starbucks cause and those who are not. Robin (the manger), Tony (a shift supervisor), and Dane (a new employee) are the most enthusiastic. Then there is a middle ground for 6 or 7 people, and finally a couple who don't seem to like Starbucks at all, possibly approaching my own level of disgust.

Looking to confirm my suspicions about Starbucks employees, I spoke with Peter Harrington, a former shift supervisor at a San Francisco Starbucks who shares a similar philosophy after working 9 months with the company. As the memories of working at Starbucks resurfaced, he admitted, "I can't believe I worked there, I'm embarrassed to be talking about this." Having been a former partner as well, I offered my sympathy and helped him through the painful memories of his Starbucks career.

Like myself, the store he worked at had the full spectrum of Starbucks employees, ranging from almost total apathy (Peter) to near cult-like devotion (his manager and partners Cindy and Steve). Helping to prove my theory that those who really care about working about Starbucks are either mentally imbalanced or hopelessly uncool, he told me about working with Cindy, a middle-aged woman stuck in the year 1985. She had crimped hair, blue eye shadow, leggings, and "a lot of close friends at Starbucks." He said that she gave off the impression of white trash, as did many of his fellow "partners." There were two 18 year old girls engaged to be married working at the store, one who worked with her husband at the same store, raising the possibilities of "a joint future career at Starbucks."

Steve, who Harrington described as a "big loser" was a devoted Starbucks employee who gave the impression of being laid back, "but he really wanted to climb the Starbucks corporate ladder." Besides his intense devotion to Starbucks, all Harrington could recall about Steve is that he punctuated everything he did with the phrase "Oh Yeah!" If he was making coffee, he would steam the milk and then say, "Oh Yeah!" if he was taking a smoke break he would inhale, tap his cigarette, and exclaim "Oh Yeah!" When Harrington saw him on the street 6 months after getting fired, he asked, "Still doing the Starbucks thing?"

"OH YEAH!"

Talking to Peter was therapeutic because I learned there are other "partners" out there in Starbucksland who worked at Starbucks and never gave a fuck, and that partners like us might put a wrench in Starbucks' eventual goal of 20,000 stores worldwide.

Harrington's girlfriend, Rachel Huffman likened Starbucks to the McDonalds of the 21st Century. In the '50s, the Drive-In or the Diner was the social gathering spot for the American Graffiti and Grease generation, along came McDonalds with their impersonal, business-savvy approach and the Drive-In all but vanished from the American landscape. In the mid '90s the coffee shop started to become the social gathering spot for generation X. Once again, along comes the mega-company, this time Starbucks, and we get our homogenized serving of mass-culture. Gone is a personal connection to the place. There is no regional flare to a Starbucks; forced to dress and talk same, employees are interchangeable; and the only people who really care about their jobs have intentions of ascending the corporate ladder.

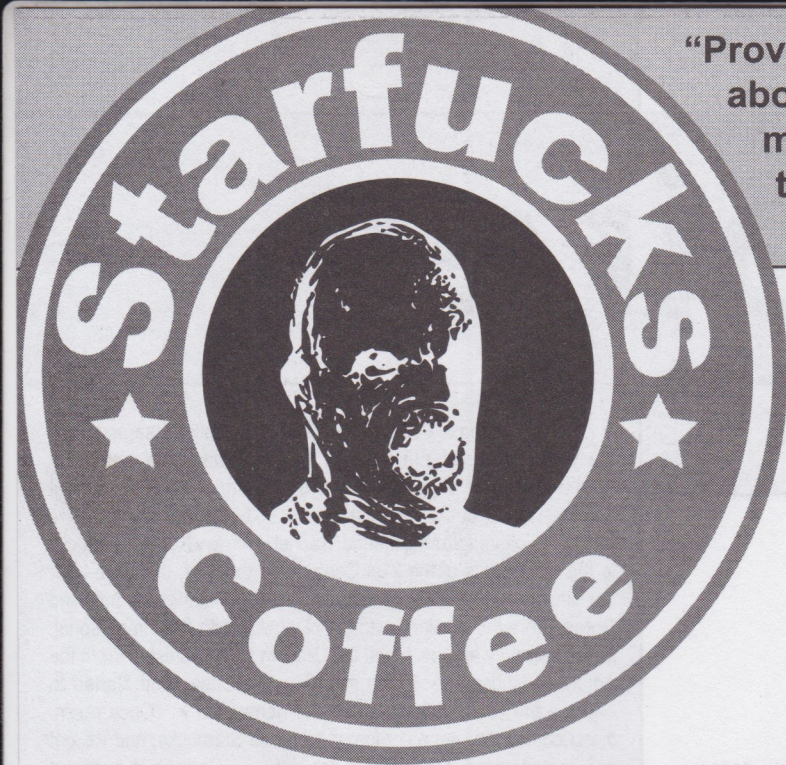
Despite these facts, Starbucks marches on towards its goal of 20,000. Currently, there are 3,300 stores in North America, up from 676 in 1995. Starbucks is expanding into new markets around the world every day as the Siren appears in the UK, the Philippines, and most recently, the Forbidden City in Beijing.

## Coffee School

Supposedly, Coffee School exists to demonstrate to each partner how much Starbucks cares about them. They pay for us to learn about "Communicating Coffee" and the principles of "Simply Service: Connect, Discover, Respond." As much as Starbucks







**"Proving my theory that those who really care about working about Starbucks are either mentally imbalanced or hopelessly uncool, he told me about working with Cindy, a middle-aged woman stuck in the year 1985."**

tries to convince me how great Coffee School is, the inherent irony is impossible to ignore. Classes are held in a completely non-descript building with no visible Starbucks logos and while I learn about what a great company I work for, people walk in late because they can't find the training site. There are no Starbucks logos to mark the training facility because if people knew what the place was, "the windows would get smashed" one training facilitator informed me. Secondly, from the body language of my fellow trainees and the style of teaching, the classroom feels a lot more like traffic school than another exciting step in my "learning journey."

My manager teaches the first day of Coffee School and within the first five minutes, I can tell this class is going to be a joke. Even though Starbucks is one of the best companies for employee benefits, granting full benefits to part time employees, something almost unheard of elsewhere in the business world, the people recruited for this class have been dredged up from the murky bottom of the talent pool. Small dixie cups of "Yukon Gold" are passed around and we are told to "smell, then slurp and locate the experience on your tongue." When Angel, one of the two kids in the room who would look more at home slingin' dime bags than Frappachinos, comments that, "All black coffee tastes the same to me," the downcast gaze, slumped shoulders and defeated tone that my manager displays would be repeated an hour and a half later when she dismissed us from class, disappointed we did not take to the Starbucks way as strongly as she had hoped. I imagine the same expression when I talk to her on the phone three weeks later as she questions my motives for drinking an entire bottle of Jim Bean on the job.

For the most part, the classes are painfully boring and students show no shame in putting their heads down for a nap mid-class in a room with only 8 or 10 other people. One high school kid answered his cell phone during the training and decided what his friend had to say was much more important than a Starbucks training video. An hour later, while my

manager drones on about what Starbucks expects of its employees, he whispers to his neighbor, then whips out his phone, steps outside for a few minutes, and returns furious for not realizing he had already taken the same class before. He comes back five minutes later, this time to retrieve his backpack that he had left behind.

There were a few nice parts to Coffee School, like our coffee tasting session, where for the first time, I noticed the difference between different coffees and acquired a vocabulary to describe them, but in the same class, we watched Mary Richardson, a twenty-year Starbucks veteran in her search for "the best coffee beans the world has to offer". Richardson is a frizzy-haired lady in her mid 40s who has the unfortunate tic of bugging her eyes every five seconds so the whites of her eyes periodically become visible all the way around her retina and then return to normal. The video showed Mary casually interacting with the native coffee growers, her pictures reminiscent of a vacation slide show to Machupichu. Our teacher added the tidbit of information the video somehow forgot to include; Ms. Richards sometimes needs, "armed escorts to go into some of these great coffee growing regions." The lengths people go for a Venti Cappachino.

I thought that any brainwashing I had been exposed to in Coffee School had been totally ignored, but when I returned to work at the store, I found myself trying hard to make a good impression. I asked all the customers if they wanted room for cream in their coffee and immediately responded to any requests that were made of me by my fellow "partners." Over the next week I found myself slipping deeper into Starbucks acceptance. I had been working undercover for about two weeks and I had yet to find some great unspeakable evil or reason for intense self-loathing because I worked at Starbucks. What I did find were a few co-workers I might consider becoming friends with, customers who rarely asked for half-caff, soy lattes with whole milk foam, and no sweatshop in the back room making Frappachino mix for 8 cents an hour.

I had taken this job with pre-meditated plans of sabotage from within, but found myself empathizing with my co-workers and questioning my initial motives. In hindsight, it was scary how close I came to saying I liked working at Starbucks. It took a visit to one of the 4 or 5 remaining independent coffee shops in the entire Boston area, and the opening of a new Starbucks across the street from my school, to resurrect my disgust for everything Starbucks.

Located in Cambridge's Inman Square, 1369 is a charming, eclectic café that represents the diversity of the neighborhood. Even though there is a Starbucks right down the street, the night I went the place was completely full until closing. I have been going to cafés like 1369 since I was in high school, but after a steady diet of nothing but Starbucks, I was taken aback by the ambience of the place. The music was loud, and the people ranged in style and age from black-clad, pentagram wearing Satan worshipers, to studious chess players, to old couples out way past their bedtime. The Starbucks down the street, on the other hand, was no different than any other Starbucks in the country: the same drinks, merchandise, art, music, and atmosphere.

In the corner of 1369, there was an elderly black man with a white plastic hockey helmet with the words "RIOT POLICE" stenciled on each side. Everyone knew him as "the reverend" and while nobody could tell me his real name, they did tell me he had lived in the neighborhood for as long as anyone could remember. He didn't really talk that much, other than saying hello to some of the regulars, and people told me he liked to sit outside during the summer and play a little Casio keyboard for money. As I sat enjoying the music, the coffee, and the conversation I was having with Frecky, a former San Francisco bike messenger now living in Boston but considering a future career as a German movie star, I glanced over at a mural that had been painted on the wall. It showed the café in the splendor of a New England summer afternoon, people walking their dogs on the street, reading books in the window, and happily conversing in the back. In the corner of



"On the evening of December 9th having already downed a 40oz of Budweiser, wearing a modified Starbucks hat that said FUCK OFF and a homemade nametag that read, "HELLO! My name is Tyler Durden," and a pint of Jim Beam in my pocket, I went to work with the every intention of getting fired, maybe even banned for life."



the painting, walking down the street was "the reverend," his head peeking out from behind a building a la Where's Waldo. He had the same white hockey helmet on that I could see from across the room, and barely legible in the brush strokes of the oil painting were the words "RIOT POLI" on the side of his helmet. At Starbucks, the only artwork on the wall was a patchwork computer printout, the pixels clearly visible from across the room.

Around the same time, a new Starbucks was getting ready to open on the corner of Tremont and Boylston, directly across the street from my school, Emerson College. After a few weeks of nothing more than a Starbucks sign hanging over an empty building and a "Coming Soon" sign in the window, literally overnight, a completed Starbucks appeared. Having just seen the movie Aliens, the new Starbucks reminded me of the scene where Ripley and the Marines stumble into the queen's chamber. The queen moves around the room, depositing eggs with a big tube-like apparatus. I can see some Queen Starbucks in the sky, placing her store-producing tube over an empty building and depositing a fresh store overnight.

When I return to work, now training at the espresso bar, the thought of busting my ass for a line of angry New Englanders stretching out the door waiting for their Venti Caramel Mochas was enough to consider my Starbucks honeymoon over.

### Project Mayhem

When the movie American Beauty came out in the fall of 1999, I subconsciously decided that I wanted to be the kid in the movie. While I didn't want a repressed gay marine for a father, I wanted to be like Ricky, a mysterious loner observing the beauty of the world through the lens of a video camera. I went far enough to look up prices on the Internet for the same kind of camera he used in the film.

My other favorite movie of the time was Fight Club. While I never had hidden fantasies of being Brad Pitt, I realized that my motives behind seeking employment at Starbucks had a distinctly Fight Club feeling. My own "Project Mayhem" included precisely placed incisions in bags of coffee beans, caramel syrup, and other containers to ensure maximum amounts of spillage when handled, making the wrong drinks, pouring half cups, insubordination towards the management, and finally, blatant consumption of alcohol on the job. If Starbucks is supposed to make people into coffee snobs, they weren't coming in to my store because only two or three people complained about the drinks I made with one shot of coffee and a cupful of water.

On the evening of December 9th, having already downed a 40oz of Budweiser, wearing a modified Starbucks hat that said FUCK OFF and a homemade nametag that read, "HELLO! My name is Tyler Durden," and a pint of Jim Beam in my pocket, I went to work with the every intention of getting fired, maybe even banned for life.

I strolled into work 20 minutes late with a nice buzz, and as the night wore on and my trips to the back room to sip on my bottle became more frequent, I slipped from drunkenness to outright belligerence. I dropped change on the floor, told customers they could not order certain drinks, made up a story about an explosion at the Chai plant that

left every Starbucks in the Northeast without Chai, and watched people's expression change as I poured cup of coffee into the register. What I could not understand in my inebriated state is what my shift supervisor thought about my actions. Looking at my hat, he nodded and said "Hmmm, Fuck off," and carried on with his business, never once asking me to take it off. Most of the customers either ignored my nametag or said, "Well hello there Tyler, can I have an Eggnog Latte?" One customer asked if my name really was Tyler Durden, before I could boast he was a character in a movie based on me, my shift supervisor told them who Tyler Durden was, and then shot me a sideways smile.

The Starbucks' Standards of Business Conduct clearly states: "We all must avoid conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest exists when a personal interest or activity interferes or appears to interfere with the duties you perform at Starbucks. A conflict of interest may unconsciously influence the most honest person and the mere appearance of a conflict of interest may cause a partner's acts to be questioned. We all must avoid situations that affect or appear to affect our ability to act in the best interests of Starbucks." In regards to the media, the manual instructs Starbucks employees that, "If a member of the media, or someone else, appears unexpectedly at a Starbucks store or other facility and asks to shoot video, take photographs or makes other inquiries, immediately notify your manager. Do not discuss Starbucks business with the individual. Your manager will contact Public Relations to ensure that the correct procedure is followed." Finally, the manual instructs that: "Partners are not permitted to use or possess alcoholic beverages on company property... Starbucks takes this policy very seriously. It is essential that you follow it."

I underlined these passages the first day of my employment as I read through packets of information about the company. I was happy to have broken all of these rules (and copyright laws by publishing them here) in my final day at Starbucks. Therefore I was not surprised when at 8:30, my shift supervisor told me I "could go home early (meaning I was to be fired officially by my manager the next day [a fantastically hilarious recording of which will be posted at the Law of Inertia website soon.]). When I first took the job, I had hopes that when I wanted to get fired, I would give a rousing speech from the counter top on the great evil that is Starbucks, followed by a climactic exit from the store involving property damage, terrified customers, and possibly police. While the closest I came to my dream was tossing a few bags of coffee into the street, I took some comfort in the fact that the store was totally empty at the time I got fired and had been for a while.



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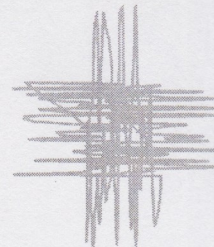


# Godspeed you Black Emperor

by Adam Parks



The problem was that Jonah had scheduled an interview with Godspeed You Black Emperor at the same time he had a mandatory one-credit class. I offered to go to the class and pretend I was him so that he could do the interview but Jonah really likes class, so he asked me to meet with Godspeed. Which I did. This was my first interview, and right off the bat I made probably the biggest mistake I could have made, which was telling Efrim and Aidan that it was my first interview. You can kind of tell for the first half that they weren't really into elaborating on their answers, which I think meant they weren't really taking me seriously. This hurt me. I was already intimidated by the buzzwords about these guys; minimalist, conceptual, reclusive, and now I had to cope with the fact that they thought I was a moron. Once we got through the "How did the band form?" crap and started talking about the nature and virtue of their instrumental music and collective politics, it got more fun. Never was I wholly at ease, but I got through it and here it is and I will never do another interview again.



I was wondering where the name came from and what it means to the focus of the group.

Efrim: A Japanese documentary about Japanese motorcycle gangs. Does it relate to anything that you're doing?

Efrim: The guys in the movie, all they did was drive around on motorcycles and drink coffee and sit in rooms. So maybe it does have something to do with us.

It's interesting that so many people can share the same type of musical and political direction.

Aidan: I don't know if we all have similar political views. But, there are commonalities in the music thing. There is a lot of divergence too.

Efrim: Definitely in the politics and the music. There are a lot of people in this band and that makes for a lot of different views on everything.

Can you talk about that process, how you guys arrived- same place, same time - and ended up doing this?

Aidan: I guess when it started, it started with a few people, and then they had a desire at a certain point to expand it to more people, and they just sort of asked everyone that they knew. I don't know if it's right to say it was related to a certain bar place or time, maybe in a way.

Efrim: A small, small community in Montreal. Very small, so a lot of it was just hatching plans.

Was that the hotel2tengo thing?

Efrim: That sort of came near the start, yeah.

So does anyone you're playing with now have formal musical training?

Efrim: A couple people.

Mostly informal and self-taught?

Efrim: Yeah, for the most part

Aidan: The school of punk rock, but even that was poorly attended.

So a lot of you guys came from punk scenes back home?

Aidan: Yeah. Sometimes far in the past.

And Godspeed is just what evolved from that?

Efrim: Yeah.

So, I read that you guys archive a lot of sounds. Do you often build a song around what you've archived?

Efrim: We've only done that once, written music to a sample.

Otherwise you just add a sample to enhance the music.

Efrim: Yeah

So, other than the samples, you're not using words to express ideas.

Do you think the titles that you use bear the weight of what the songs mean?

Efrim: On this record. Up to this record all the titles we used were working titles, just whatever you call it when you're coming up with it, and we never really changed it. And this is the first record where we actually gave things names.

Aidan: We sat down and argued about names a little bit.

The titles on the new album kind of indicate a full circle. Does it feel like a complete journey to you?

Efrim: The new record? Yeah, I hope so!

Aidan: That's kind of like asking us if we're nice (We all laugh a lot). Yes, we're very nice. I don't know.

In this kind of minimalist approach (to songwriting), can you talk about the kind of dynamics that you use, the musical vocabulary?

Aidan: It sort of comes out of having things like strings in the band. In order for them to



have a place sometimes you have to be quiet in a way. That's one of the reasons.

**Efrim:** I think the problem is that the people who play the loudest instruments in the band are the same people who are the most anxious to play loudly all the time. So a lot of the dynamic stuff is this forced sort of tension between the loud-mouths and the not-loud-mouths.

**Does that create problems in writing?**

**Efrim:** A lot of things create problems in writing, but yeah, I mean, not big problems.

**Aidan:** I know myself, when I started playing in this band, it would kill me just waiting to go loud, but I just learned.

**How much does what you play at a live show vary from what you have recorded?**

**Aidan:** Not much.

**Efrim:** I think a lot, but it depends at what level. You know? The energy and the pace.

**Aidan:** And there are certain parts that have never really been defined, but for the most part it's sort of mapped out.

**Efrim:** It's sort of more unruly, the live stuff, too. It's just more ugly.

**Can you talk about how it's different for you playing for an audience versus rehearsing with just the nine of you?**

**Aidan:** We stop a lot at rehearsals, and argue.

**Efrim:** Yeah, we have a hard time when we practice.

**Aidan:** Yeah, I mean the band is, in name, set up as some sort of collective in such a way that there's not like one leader or something like that, so decisions about things sometimes take a while. We talk a lot.

**Efrim:** Everybody's got an equal voice so that's a lot of people who will have an opinion about the same thing.

**Do you feel a different intensity playing in front of an audience?**

**Efrim:** It depends what the show is, you know? It's hard, especially now because we're playing places that are a bit bigger. It's a lot easier in a smaller place where everyone's cramped in and the ceilings are low and you have people right there.

**You prefer that?**

**Efrim:** Yeah.

**Do you like playing on a stage?**

**Efrim:** No. I would prefer at least a low stage if it has to be a stage.

**Aidan:** I like to be able to at least stick my head up above and see what's going on around the back, but I don't want to be looking like I'm some kind of god or something.

**What were some of the initial reactions, when you**

**first started playing out, to the stuff that you were doing?**

**Efrim:** In Montreal it was good, but the first American tour we did was kind of weird. We booked it ourselves so we were playing a lot of strange Wednesday night shows, thrown on with whoever. That was a bit rough.

**Aidan:** That's not that unusual though. Sort of the typical rock and roll story, you know?

**Efrim:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. For sure.

**Now that a bigger audience is aware of your presence, has that created a change in people's reaction to what you're doing?**

**Efrim:** I think the big thing that I've noticed, especially on the last leg of the tour is that because more people know us, they're more... I don't know what the polite word for it would be, but, just kind of like 'schmoozy', you know, but on some sort of feeling of being impressed with us.

**Aidan:** It's 'cool'.

**Efrim:** Yeah, that's it. There's just a level of hipness now, and I find I'm having more conversations where I'm having to learn how to be rude and just say "Look I can't talk anymore", and walk away, which I never felt like I had to do before. Usually conversations after the show, with people who were at the show, were sort of interesting and they still are, sort of.

**Aidan:** And some people are definitely totally cool to meet afterwards. You can usually tell within a few sentences, but it takes a skill to learn.

**Since your music is fairly conceptual, and you're pervading a scene dominated by music that is less conceptual, do you see that as a problem as far as connecting with people?**

**Efrim:** Yeah, I mean, I don't know if that's a problem or not. I think the sad truth is that a lot of how people understand what we do is shaped by the few facts that there are floating around about us, and the few careless adjectives that people end up using. So I think that's a problem. You end up with people who aren't making their own experience of it. There's already baggage there that's been put there by people, not us. Like the "apocalyptic" thing.

**Aidan:** The other thing is that there's an attempt with the films and the record covers and such - and sometimes speeches and stuff - to put things into context too. Maybe because I don't understand what "conceptual" means?

**Efrim:** We're never going to out and out explain things, but we do work pretty hard to make a framework that, if you just use your head a bit, you're going to understand.

**How have things changed between the stuff you were recording before and this last record?**

**Efrim:** Well, this is the first record that we ever did where all the stuff we'd been playing live for two years. I think that's the big difference, and it was frustrating on that level because everything was sort of already established, and it was difficult to work that way.

We're trying to figure out how the next thing we do will be less like that. Sort of more loose, more exciting.

**It got too rigid?**

**Efrim:** Yeah. We'd been on the road almost non-stop for the last three years, so we sort of got ahead of ourselves.



**Aidan:** And the other way it's changed too that hasn't been noted. I've been thinking about this a lot lately. You know how the economy is going well in the western world and people have a lot of spare money to spend on CDs and to go to shows and to come see us. And we're not wealthy, but we have enough time now that we can spend two or three weeks making a double-record, rather than a weekend making a record. And we're also making a living off of this thing – not like a crazy living – but a living off of it, and there is more of an optimistic tint to the record than maybe before. I think other people have noted it. And I think it will just take the next depression in the economy to erase that.

**Efrim:** At the same time, those songs were all written when we were still flat fucking broke.

**Aidan:** Yeah, but it's a bit more optimistic.

**Efrim:** Yeah. I'm just saying that I don't think it's because we were able to get off welfare that all of a sudden we were writing more optimistic songs. Like, I remember when we wrote the first song. That was when I lost my car. That was a nightmare time for me in terms of money.

**Aidan:** I don't just mean in terms of money though. In terms of people listening to us, who got to hear our band.

**So you feel like that recognition has affected the music?**

**Efrim:** We should put this in perspective, because we don't have that much recognition. We're still just like a tiny speck on things, you know? But we're weirdly hypersensitive, even to that, and I think we put a lot of stress on ourselves when we were working on this record. It's the first time that we ever made anything that we knew people were going to listen to. And that's our own hang-up. I may be just speaking for myself, but I found that really disproportionately stressful, going through that. The other two records we did were just like throwing a bottle into the ocean and hoping... really just wanting, believing that there were people out there who were in shared circumstances, who would maybe pick up the bottle and understand. This is the first thing that we ever did that was like realizing that people had picked up the bottle. It's like getting up the nerve to talk to someone and then there's that uncomfortable pause after you talk to them when no one has anything to say. It felt like that, and that to me has been the biggest difference.

**Can you talk about that message in a bottle type of communication with a smaller audience, versus bands like Rage Against the Machine that are blowing up and getting a message out, but not living the message?**

**Efrim:** Yeah, but that's a complicated thing. Number one, anything that's communicated over mass media is immediately completely tainted and distorted. That's obvious, right? Number two, if you're into communicating that way, then you're into sloganeering, and you have to reduce things to the shortest aphorisms because that's the only way that it's going to cut across. And number three, with the Rage Against the Machine thing, they're so obviously full of fucking shit, you know? They're on fucking Sony. If you want to sit down and look at the political situation of the world, and you want to create a tactic, I don't think there's any justification for a band on a major label to be shouting fucking Maoist slogans across the airwaves. That's just not needed in terms of whatever the common cause is. I don't think they're communicating anything. I don't think they're enlightening people politically. It's like a Gap commercial.

**Aidan:** I don't know if I feel so strongly about them. I treat something like Rage Against the Machine as the only thing it could best be is like a gateway drug. In a sense, I think there might be a role for something like that, but there's got to be something on the other end.

**Efrim:** It just seems like the work that needs to be done is on a smaller level. You need something like local community work that needs to be done. And the conversations that need to be had about these sorts of issues, they need to be done coherently and articulately.

**When you're doing a tour like this, are you compromising that?**

**Efrim:** I don't think we're doing too much. We're not compromising, but we're not communicating at that level. And there are people in this band who get angry at themselves all the time on that level. It's tricky because we don't have a singer. We don't have lyrics. The approach we take is pretty subtle in that sense, which I think is valid, but at the same time when it becomes your full-time occupation, it's frustrating for sure. I mean, you can make a point of standing outside after a show and trying to talk to people, but even that, I don't know how effective it is. It's all really tricky.

**Aidan:** On that level too, we don't all come from any specific political point of view, all nine of us. It's more the fact that we work as a collective. It's like leading by example. It'd be pretty hard to come up with a political agenda between the nine of us because we don't share all the same political views.

**Efrim:** Jean Smith, who we're touring with, I was talking to her last night about all this and she thought that just by virtue of what we were doing that that somehow was a step, that there was something being communicated whether we're aware of it or not, just



by what it is we're doing and the personalities involved. And that was good to hear because I have respect for her.

And maybe that's true. I don't know.

**As far as the music; without lyrics, what's basically left is for you to evoke an emotion. Is it troublesome communicating with a consumerist society that has learned to react to emotional music in a socialized way?**

**Efrim:** I think it's troublesome on a minor level. You know, like the whole "cinematic" thing that we continued to be nailed with is such a product of what you're saying. It's like that's the context – mostly the context – that people are used to hearing. Sad music that has chamber instruments in it, that doesn't have any words. That's mostly where people hear stuff like that, so when they hear something, immediately it's "cinematic". And I don't think that anyone's lying awake at night, upset that people are using that word. It's more like an annoyance. But yeah, I think the way that people understand music in a whole lot of things can be disheartening if you think about it too hard. There's a lot of bullshit that you've got to cut through to actually talk.

**As far as influence, where do you derive that ability to bring out emotion?**

**Efrim:** There's too many of us in the band to talk for people. We never go there.

**Aidan:** People in this band like music and listen to a lot of music. I think it's important for musicians to listen to a lot of music.

**Efrim:** Yeah

**Can you speak for the band, or at least for yourselves, about what kind of emotion you hope to trigger in an audience?**

**Aidan:** The best explanation that someone else gave me about it once was "Oh, this world is fucked up. This is horrible, but it's gonna be all right."

**Efrim:** Well, I think it's also just feeling okay about not being happy. Being okay with being confused and upset and worried and anxious. I think that's important. I think that needs to be communicated more.

**Aidan:** And myself personally, I'd like to add just being proud that you're struggling in a way, but not proud in some bogus way.

**Someone asked me once what I thought I gave to music and what I take from it. Can you talk about that on a personal level?**

**Aidan:** I know I'm alive because of it. I mean, there was a certain point in my life where I was like, "Well, this is something I really love, so this is what I'm going to do." And I'm happy that somebody's listening.

**Efrim:** I think we have a respect for music and a respect for what certain kinds of music have made us feel throughout our lives. You know? Some sort of ideal. And I think we've done an okay job of not pissing on that ideal. And at the end of the day, that's all we can hope to do, is not take that for granted and not piss on that. I mean, that's all you can do. And I think there's a certain degree of self consciousness on the part of the people in this band too, about being engaged with music. That it's a strange thing to be a musician and to love music. You can really make yourself crazy thinking about it. But obviously music is good and important, and the things that are good and important about music need to be respected. And that can manifest itself in a million ways. Obviously trying to keep it out of the hands of industry is important, and I'll respect any band that's just trying to do that regardless of what their agenda is. People who have reached what should be an obvious conclusion. That's all we can try to do, and that's all that we can hope that people will understand; that we're always trying to better respect what it is we're engaged with and in. That's all I know, reduce things to the shortest aphorisms because that's the only way that it's going to cut across. And number three, with the Rage Against the Machine thing, they're so obviously full of fucking shit, you know? They're on fucking Sony. If you want to sit down and look at the political situation of the world, and you want to create a tactic, I don't think there's any justification for a band on



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**Efrim:** Jean Smith, who we're touring with, I was talking to her last night about all this and she thought that just by virtue of what we're doing that that somehow was a step, that there was something being communicated whether we're aware of it or not, just by what it is we're doing and the personalities involved. And that was good to hear because I have respect for her. And maybe that's true. I don't know.

**As far as the music; without lyrics, what's basically left is for you to evoke an emotion. Is it troublesome communicating with a consumerist society that has learned to react to emotional music in a socialized way?**

**Efrim:** I think it's troublesome on a minor level. You know, like the whole "cinematic" thing that we continued to be nailed with is such a product of what you're saying. It's like that's the context—mostly the context—that people are used to hearing. Sad music that has chamber instruments in it, that doesn't have any words. That's mostly where people hear stuff like that, so when they hear something, immediately it's "cinematic". And I don't think that anyone's lying awake at night, upset that people are using that word. It's more like an annoyance. But yeah, I think the way that people understand music in a whole lot of things can be disheartening if you think about it too hard. There's a lot of bullshit that you've got to cut through to actually talk.

**As far as influence, where do you derive that ability to bring out emotion?**

**Efrim:** There's too many of us in the band to talk for people. We never go there.

**Aidan:** People in this band like music and listen to a lot of music. I think it's important for musicians to listen to a lot of music.

**Can you speak for the band, or at least for yourselves, about what kind of emotion you hope to trigger in an audience?**

**Aidan:** The best explanation that someone else gave me about it once was: "Oh, this world is fucked up. This is horrible, but it's gonna be all right."

**Efrim:** Well, I think it's also just feeling okay about not being happy. Being okay with being confused and upset and worried and anxious. I think that's important. I think that needs to be communicated more.

**Aidan:** And myself personally, I'd like to add just being proud that you're struggling in a way, but not proud in some bogus way.

**Someone asked me once what I thought I gave to music and what I take from it. Can you talk about that on a personal level?**

**Aidan:** I know I'm alive because of it. I mean, there was a certain point in my life where I was like, "Well, this is something I really love, so this is what I'm going to do." And I'm happy that somebody's listening.

**Efrim:** I think we have a respect for music and a respect for what certain kinds of music have made us feel throughout our lives. You know? Some sort of ideal. And I think we've done an okay job of not pissing on that ideal. And at the end of the day, that's all we can hope to do, is not take that for granted and not piss on that. I mean, that's all you can do. And I think there's a certain degree of self-consciousness on the part of the people in this band too, about being engaged with music. That it's a strange thing to be a musician and to love music. You can really make yourself crazy thinking about it. But obviously music is good and important, and the things that are good and important about music need to be respected. And that can manifest itself in a million ways. Obviously trying to keep it out of the hands of industry is important, and I'll respect any band that's just trying to do that regardless of what their agenda is. People who have reached what should be an obvious conclusion. That's all we can try to do, and that's all that we can hope that people will understand; that we're always trying to better respect what it is we're engaged with and in. That's all I know.

**Photos by Jonah**

[Law of Inertia] [79]



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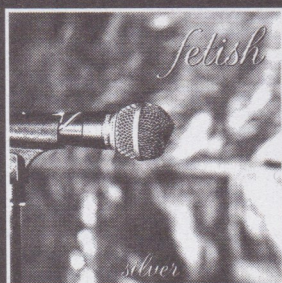
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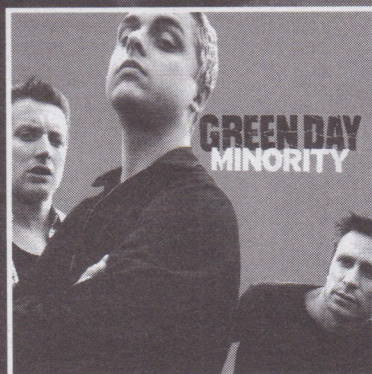
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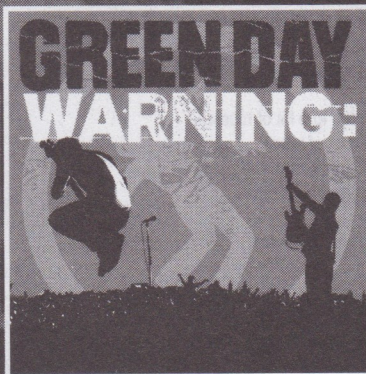
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# Nick Powers

International Man of Mastery

Ben Affleck sucks.

Oh, you knew that already? No, I mean he's absolutely awful. Just the bane of my existence. I can't think of any prominent actor in movies today that is so devoid of acting prowess and does such a bad job of picking the films he stars in.

And on top of that he just about ruined my Thanksgiving break, the first extended escape I have had from the daily grind in more than two months. How, you ask? Well, first of all I have this nagging annoyance called a writers' conscience that told me before I could fairly rip this talent-less hack to shreds, I needed to see a few more of his movies. So I saw three of his "best" movies, wasting a good six hours of my life and probably accelerating the decay of my already rotting brain. Then, when I was explaining the basis of my dislike as well as the reason I would possibly be subjecting myself to such an awful experience during my four day break, my stepsister told me that I kind of look like him. I've been nauseous with self-loathing ever since.

You see, Ben Affleck is really good at playing one type of character – the one-dimensional-simple-type-of-guy-most-girls-would-be-proud-to-take-home-to-their-parents. His characters are generally likeable, clean-cut, really take some coaxing to be

outwardly emotional, know how to chat up a girl, and look like they'll be pretty successful in life, because they have their head on straight. Any stretch from this role generally makes the viewer all too aware of this actor's shortcomings and leaves us wanting more.

And his talent for picking movies is almost as bad. I can't tell if he just likes to play it safe, choosing characters he can emulate without working too hard before collecting his fat paycheck on the way home, or if he is actually very, very stupid. Did he actually think "Reindeer Games" was going to be a good, quality film? Earlier on in the piece of crap that he calls a career, he did some truly awful movies. I know a young actor striving to make it in the film world can't be too picky when he's looking for a break, but do you know that he starred in a movie (I'm praying it was only shown on HBO) called "A Body to Die For: The Aaron Henry Story" that was basically an after-school special about steroid abuse? Just think of that next time some schmuck on E! calls him a brilliant young actor.

Let's go back to the beginning. After a minor role in "School Ties" (I think he played one of the less convincing anti-Semite prep school boys), and a bit part in stoner favorite "Dazed and Confused", Ben got into a couple films with indie director Kevin Smith. First, he played a simple, clean-cut, not too convincing asshole in "Mallrats", and then after a reprisal of the Aaron Henry role for an HBO series (I am absolutely not making this crap up – apparently he found it *that* rewarding that he needed to do a follow-up TV episode), he played a simple, clean-cut, not-too-convincing lesbian-wooer in "Chasing Amy".

Then came his big break in "Good Will Hunting" – a good movie which was subsequently shoved so far down our cinephile throats that even rice pudding still tastes like Minnie Driver's hair. The crime with this movie is the fact that the Academy was able to tack an award onto Ben Affleck's

name, since he "co-wrote" the screenplay with his buddy who is slightly more talented, yet equally appealing for single women to take home to their parents, Matt Damon. Obviously I am not an authority on the writing of their screenplay, but I read in an interview that Ben's role was rarely more than typing out what Matt dictated to him. Academy Award winner indeed. On another note, a friend also pointed out to me back when this movie came out, that while it was a better-than-average screenplay, a better story might be written about two guys from Boston who write a screenplay so they can go to Hollywood and score with some movie star chicks.

And this movie marked the beginning of the end. Since his big break in "Good Will Hunting", Benny boy has milked the corporate Hollywood cash cow for all it's worth, choosing such bad-script, big box-office juggernauts as "Armageddon" and "Forces of Nature". (Yes,



I actually saw both of those. No, I'm not proud it. And yes, they were more than painful to watch.) His return-to-roots indie flicks during the same period, with one notable exception, have been mediocre at best. And the two good films he appeared in, in minor stretches from his usual typecast-role, were anomalies where he got in because of connections (Gwyneth in "Shakespeare in Love", Kevin Smith again in "Dogma"), and then did passable but ordinary performances. His involvement in "Shakespeare in Love", by the way, was so nominal that I've already spent way too much time talking about it.

Not that a hard-working actor shouldn't earn a fat check some day. But lest you confuse Affleck with his character in Good Will Hunting, he didn't exactly work his way out of the 'hood.' He went to a prestigious prep school right around the corner from Harvard, and one of the hardships he attested to enduring before he hit it big was when he and Matt had to rent out a room of their Hollywood house "just to get by". Must have been tough. And his publicized decision to forego his pay in next summer's much-too-much-anticipated "Pearl Harbor", where he'll star with fellow-undeserving-award-winner Cuba Gooding Jr. in a big-budget movie that will simultaneously taint the careers of two fairly good indie performers (Josh Hartnett and Kate Beckinsale, if you must know), approaches respectability, but hardly atones for his past sins.

So why I am I picking on this guy instead of the hundreds of other mediocre, wealthy actors out there? I mean I've never met him, he can't be that bad of a person, so why the vindictive bashing? Maybe it's because he gets to make out with all the hot "it" girls of the movie industry. Maybe it's because he comes off as a cocky, unentertaining wanker whenever he makes the late-night talk show rounds. Maybe it's because I haven't had that luck of girls wanting to take me home to their parents very often yet. But I really think it's that damn award, that somehow subliminally says that he's going to save cinema, (I think Edward Norton and Darren Aronofsky are the favorites to play Jesus to the film industry, personally) that pushed me to the limit. I think the exact moment was actually when seeing an ad for "Bounce", his latest nausea inducing schmaltz-fest, that mentioned his accolades in this hallowed homage-to-

artistry voice that implied greatness unmatched in centuries. And that's why I have taken it upon myself to launch a grass-roots anti-Ben Affleck campaign.

See, a great thing happened to one of Ben's latest movies, "Reindeer Games". It didn't make its budget back at the box office. So his marketability and asking price went down a bit. So now we just have to continue the trend by never, ever, ever seeing another one of his movies again. Hopefully you have been wiser than me and seen fewer mind-numbing hours of his oeuvre than I have, but whatever the case, if you believe in the cause, you could also seriously help it by spreading the facts. Tell your friends and your enemies, your parents and your little brother, to let the movie marketers know that we will not settle for mediocre drivel from good-looking movie stars just because the Academy managed to tack an award to their name in an effort to pass them off as talented and in the process try to revitalize Hollywood. Be a smart movie-goer, damn it! Don't make the same mistake I did. Together, we can still beat this menace before it's too late.



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# Propagandhi by Ross







I hate to deify people involved in punk rock. In other words, I hate to think that there are people in punk rock that are smarter, better looking, or more talented than your average Joe. I think that's the great thing about punk rock, in theory, the line between fan and rockstar is razor thin. We in punk rock have realized that the people we pay five bucks every Saturday night to see and sing along with and buy their records are just ordinary people trying to get by doing what they love, and not necessarily people worthy of sainthood. Still, it is quite hard for me to approach certain people in punk rock merely because I have such a profound respect for their work and the message they convey. Certain people who are so outspoken, inspiring, and often opinionated are tough to talk to (be they punk rockers at heart or the rockstars I look down upon). Chris from Propagandhi is one of those people. He is possibly the most opinionated man in punk rock, and I have to say that even though some of his views may be a bit extreme for me, it is so refreshing to see someone out there who stands by his beliefs and doesn't try to water down his views to sell some records. Don't get me wrong, Propagandhi's songs are fantastic as well, but it is their message that I was intensely interested in. So, I set up an interview with a very interesting guy. What I found out is that he is very serious, very focused, and very humble. Read on.

**Okay, Chris, tough questions for you today. Are you ready?**

I think so. I'll do my best to try to answer them.

**Then the first question is: how does it feel when I tell you that you changed my life?**

Awkward, I suppose (laughter), and I guess a little bit self-conscious in that I would hope it was for the better and not for the worse. I would hope that as long as it's a positive impact then that's great. I would absolutely hate to negatively impact people.

**Yeah, it was positive.**

Then it's all worth, it I guess.

**Do people other than myself ever tell you that?**

They do, but it's usually people you don't know and you really don't know what that means. For instance, when you tell me that I don't know what context your change would be in. Did you go on to do things that I would be interested in? Or, things that I would be scared of. It's hard to say. I would hate to turn people into pieces of shit (laughter).

**Well, do you ever meet people that you get to know a little bit better and then you realize the way you changed their life is for the negative?**

Um, I would say that sometimes I meet younger people who are urgently excited about the new ideas—as I was and still am, but in a different presentational context—who I see that have been impacted and in turn are not extending the circle of allies but instead are making more enemies. Their preference or interpretation of our ideas is to isolate themselves from other people who may be allies for the "cause." I can see how that may be in response to the last record. I hope people did glean the more positive points we were trying to make in the past and are extending the circle of allies rather than turn into a ghetto of marginalized politics.

**Let me ask another question: your politics tend to be very strong. Do you ever feel like you're isolating people?**

Well, that's what I mean. I believe everything I've said on the records, but I think the presentation, now looking back, is very important. Especially on the last record where it's more a way to give people an identity rather than pursue a positive social agenda. At the time of the last record it was calculated to make sure people understood what we were saying as opposed to making knee-jerk reactions based on what I sang about.

**Like that Shell Oil sample used the same quote on the last record.**

Hey, you've got a good memory.

**Well, I love "Less Talk, More Rock." But, you're probably sick of that record now.**

Sick? I see value in it, and I can see where my frame of mind was then, what we were all thinking. You see, the level of involvement we were suddenly all experiencing was intense and very new to us. I think that's reflected in the presentation of the ideas.

**Were you never very active before that? 'Cause I would guess that you were.**

I was active, but not to the extent that we became. Our hands were forced by the reaction to the first record to consider the cursory reaction to music. We got way more involved and to this day remain involved. I don't regret what happened before but we're not thinking the same way we were.

**So, when you say that your mindset may be different, are your politics less extreme? And, are you less angry?**

No, I'm more angry (laughter). The contradiction is that I'm actually angrier because I have a fuller understanding of what is happening. And, it's pretty maddening when you learn more about the powers that be. But, at the same time my focus is different. I like to think I'm not as into attacking and more into unifying these days. In 1996, I was way more into attacking. That goes no where after a while. Some people change by being hit over the head with a hammer. But, most people don't change that way. Most people either ignore it or tolerate it for a time and then react badly.

**So what led to your change?**



I guess just seeing younger people come up and doing the same thing and just feeling embarrassed for how certain people were reacting to our stuff. And, as I implied earlier, I really can't blame them because of where I was at then. Just getting a little more serious since that last record, being involved in more groups, having more interaction with people of different backgrounds and different experiences where there is nothing identical between the people I work with. You need to capitalize on the differences and similarities and not just the commonalities. At the time we wanted to leave any impression, even if it wasn't positive, and I think we're a more positive outfit four or five years after the fact. We're not as into pissing people off just to get a reaction out of them. Not everyone took it the way we wanted to.

**Chris, I think you and I are similar in the fact that we would, or would have, substituted cohesion for discussion. In other words, we would have sacrificed the message just to get people talking and considering.**

I think I agree, if I understand what you were saying. I don't think people should give up what they believe in just to create non-confrontation. You have to do a cost benefit analysis of your politics. What are you going to gain and what are you going to lose by presenting your politics a certain way? In a bigger picture, for the struggle in general, you can make an analogy to the struggle in Seattle. Between the Black Bloc and the Young Anarchists and some of the more mainstream people there, people weren't considering who they were actually hurting or helping. Everyone was thinking for themselves really.

**To change the subject, on your last record you basically spell out your treatise, or anti-manifesto as it were, as "Gay Positive, Pro-Feminist, Animal Friendly, Anti-Fascist" and so-on. What can we expect from the next record, if anything different?**

That record came out in '96, and we just recorded a new one, so "Less Talk, More Rock" was around five years ago. It's hard to say what is different. Those four ideas that were in the forefront of the last record are still there, but again they're presented in a different way. I think the focus of this record was more on—well, a conscious decision to focus more on policy of empire rather than of so many different facets of activism. I'm not sure how to explain it.

**Is it the same musical style at all?**

Probably a bit faster and harder. Someone said it was more like the first record, but to me it doesn't have the poppy element to it that I think the first record did.

**There's definitely a progression between your two records. I mean, you guys have been around for years and only have two records released thus far. You're not quite the Beatles as far as being prolific goes.**

No, definitely not (laughter).

**There seems to be a linear path between the two. On the second record you're dealing with different issues than you're dealing with on the first record, and I guess the next logical step would be different issues on the third record.**

So, I guess now that you've said that I think this next record is just the logical conclusion of the music we've been interested in and the politics we've been interested in as well. It's definitely a progression.

**Okay, I've got a stupid question for you now.**

Shoot.

**Chris, where ya been the past five years?**

Mostly in Winnipeg. We did some touring in '97 and a little in '98. But, mostly in those years Jordan and I committed most of our time and energy to establishing G-7 Welcoming Committee Records, which is a worker owned record label. We tend to focus on the side of resistance culture. It took us two full years to even get it off the ground.

**Why was that?**

Because we had never done it before. We had to get people to take us seriously and even know that we existed. We're still in that process of trial and error. At the time it was just me, Jordan, and our friend Derrick. The third year we actually started to work on new material and the 4<sup>th</sup> year we actually got down to it and started recording. So it makes sense, we weren't just doing nothing. We actually released fourteen records in that period of time, it was just by other people.

**On another tangent, when I listen to Propagandhi's music, it is clear that you guys are great musicians and very talented song-writers, but it seems to me that the music comes second. The message is what is important and not necessarily the melody. Do you agree, and if so why do you choose music to voice your opinions instead of another medium.**

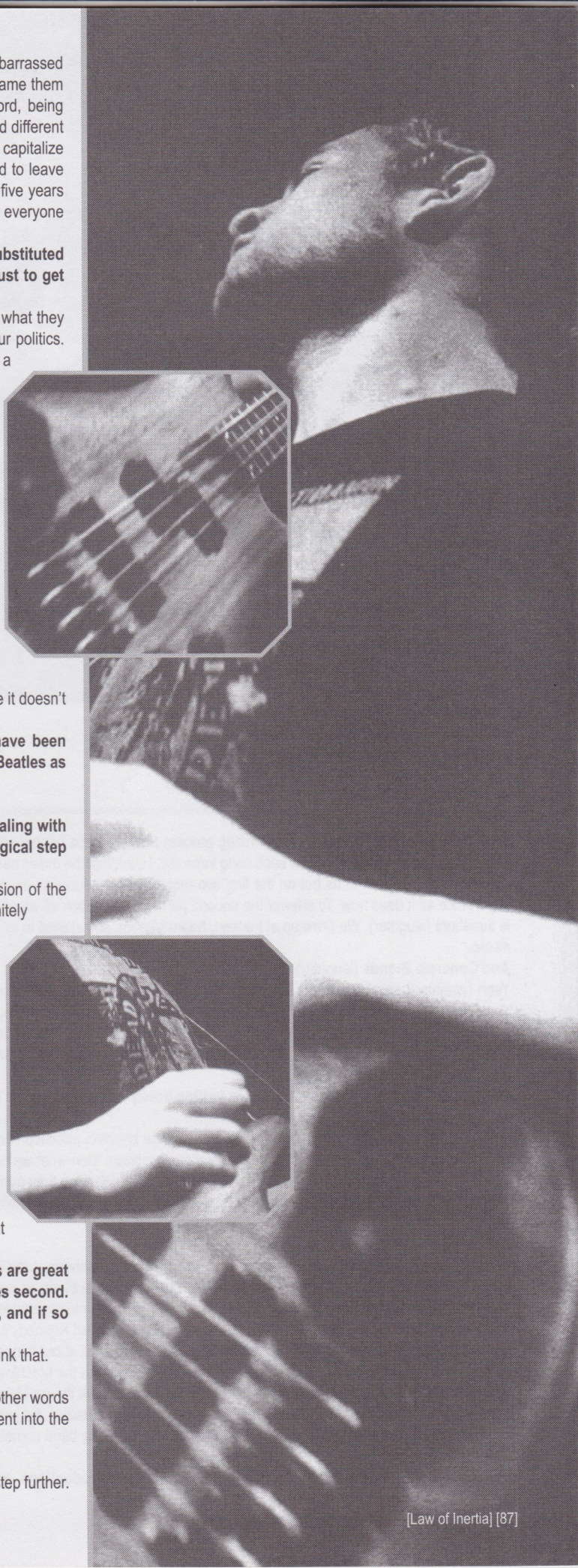
First I'd say that looking back on the first two records I could see how someone would think that.

**Is that unfair of me to think?**

It's not unfair, 'cause I look back and it sounds like we spent more time on the lyrics. In other words I don't think there was as much intensity in the music as there is now. Very little effort went into the song-writing.

**Oh no, that's not what I'm saying at all.**

But, that's what I think, you see. I agree with what you're saying and I think I can take it a step further.







It's a much more intense, cooperative writing process now. All three people are very demanding and critical of how each song turns out. I think that the music has always been important to us but on the first two records it didn't have as much importance as it does now. To answer the second part of the question all we are is thrashers (laughter). We grew up at thirteen, heard Venom, and started to like music.

**And Concrete Blonde (laughter).**

Yeah (laughter), so all we are is thrashers. We're not professionals, we're not poets, we're not politicians. We just like music and it seems to be the only thing we're even marginally good at. Especially in terms of helping further resistance culture, I think the best way for us to do that is through music since it may be the only thing we're good at (laughter).

**Do you think that music is as effective as writing books or giving lectures? Or even as much as being a journalist.**

I think music is very important in being a starting point for people's education on activism. I think Noam Chomsky's work is way more important than what we're doing. The scope and magnitude of his work is much more far-reaching than ours will ever be. With Rage Against the Machine you might be able to say that there's something more important going on.

**Although, let's give Rage some credit.**

Oh, for sure. Their impact is much huger than most artists or activists. I think they've done an amazing job of dealing with their success and activism at the same time. But, in terms of me, Jordan, and Todd, we were turned onto resistance culture and thinking differently about the world after we heard Dead Kennedy's, Corrosion of Conformity, and MDC. Those bands moved us to think about things we had never thought of before. So, if a kid listens to Rage Against the Machine and the same thing happens then that's great. Unfortunately I think the problem with that band is that they don't force enough people into action. Rather, it's just bedroom rebellion-- subvert the system until the next hard rocking band comes along.

**Do you ever listen to Public Enemy or Boogie Down Productions or**

**anything like that?**

I didn't then, but now I'm getting more into stuff like Dead Prez, things like that. The more the merrier as far as I'm concerned. Public Enemy I'd put in the same league as Rage Against the Machine. But those bands I mentioned were an eye-opener, and after that I looked to literature and other people in order to learn more.

**Chris, to change the subject again, you talk about yourself in almost every song you guys play.**

Oh shit, you're right. I'm a self-centered jerk (laughter).

**No, I mean that in a very good way. A listener of all of Propagandhi's work sort of pieces together your life. It pieces together your father, your sexuality, your eating habits. Do you know what I mean?**

I see what you're saying.

**Your lyrics are so honest and so acerbic and so passionate. Do you ever feel awkward about writing a song about yourself and baring all for the world to see?**

I didn't at the time, only in retrospect. My dad's and my relationship has changed since I was a teenager. I no longer see him as a fascist tyrant. He's just a guy. He went to the military because he had no money. He's a landed immigrant from Britain. In retrospect you kind of cringe from what you show people that might not be so true anymore. But, this record is just thirty minutes out of an entire life, so what can you do? I'm not too worried that people will think that that's all I am. I hope they don't at least.

**I hope so too. On the new record are you as deeply personal as you are in the past?**

I would say these new lyrics are the strongest I've ever done and I feel more strongly about them than anything I've ever done in the past. I don't know if there's as much of a first-person reference, but everything comes straight from the heart.

**Thanks Chris, that was very interesting.**

No problem, Ross, I had a good time. Take care.





## blue line medic

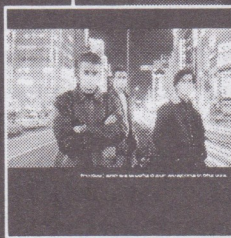
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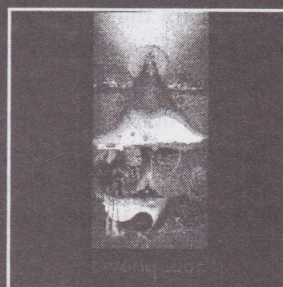
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# Expression-ism

Of misheard and misinterpreted idioms

As a youngster, it used to be a tradition of mine on Sundays to attempt to read William Safire's column in the *New York Times Magazine*, "On Language." For those uninitiated with his work, it is a weekly discourse on the linguistic roots of English as he attempts to trace the historical lineage of various topical and newsworthy turns of phrase that he has encountered.

To this day, I'm still trying to figure out why a smug and scholarly column with such a narrow scope would have captured the interest of a young tyke like myself, but I will leave a discussion of my various neuroses for another time. Whatever it was that compelled me to pick up the column, it was most definitely a sincere motivation and I always looked forward to Sundays to see Safire's latest installment.

However, shortly after reading the deceptively simple title, the law of diminishing returns would quickly set in and, after an hour or so of furrowing my brow in the hopes of impressing anyone who passed by, I would come away from my endeavor with the deflating impression that although Safire's piece was definitely *about* English, it most certainly was not *written* in English.

Needless to say, I soon gave up the ritual and even today, I find it hard to pluck up the courage to endure his nauseatingly pompous tone, reconciling my refusal to give it the time of day with the knowledge that my Sundays can be much better spent than suffering through columns that read more like dissertations than enlightening investigations of the official language of the civilized world and the only one worth learning. Besides, I already know English sufficiently good and can't think of any words out there I

don't already know the meaning of...*he writes, managing not to end the sentence with a preposition.*

All joking aside, I must be brutally honest and admit that my bitterness towards "On Language" stems from the fact I have neither the aptitude nor the patience to read it, two embarrassing deficiencies that have led me to hypothesize a new angle for Safire to expand his readership to include more people like myself who sharpened their English skills not through reading, but phonetically with much thanks to Gary Coleman, Casey Kasem, the *Thunder Cats*® and an inexhaustible supply of "your mother" jokes. (After much deliberation, I made the executive decision that literature in which the words POW!, BLAM! and THWANK! comprise 30% or more of the active vocabulary does not count as "reading.")

Fully confident that Safire is, indeed, reading this, I propose that he alter the focus of his column from investigating the etymological roots of words and adopt the more modest and utilitarian task of clarifying common phrases and idioms that those of us who feel a greater kinship to 'The Price is Right' winners than Pulitzer Prize winners often mishear and misinterpret.

For example, when I encountered the phrase "take it for granted" in print for the first time a few years ago, my mental image of it was immediately shattered, because up until that point, I had always heard it as "take it for granite." As ludicrous as it sounds, it made perfect sense in my overactive if unripe mind because, as everyone knows, granite is the most abundant type of rock formation and therefore quite easy to under-appreciate.

Thus, when I once forgot to return my ex-girlfriend's phone call for a week and a half and she later informed me that I was taking her love for granite, I knew

## MEAT



## GRANITE



## THE PAN





it was serious. After all, as Hollywood and Hallmark® cards have always taught me, love is a very rare and precious commodity, and not something so ordinary and common as, say, granite. By accusing me of taking her love for granite, she was, I understood it, claiming that I was cheapening our relationship. Accordingly, I responded in the most apologetic, earnest tone I could muster, that I really did value her affection more than dirt.

Suffice it to say we no longer speak, but that's irrelevant. What is of more importance in this (ill-)fated interaction is that I, without ever having seen the phrase "take it for granted" in its correct form, had rationalized my version in such a manner that allowed me to understand "take it for granite" to mean the very same thing!

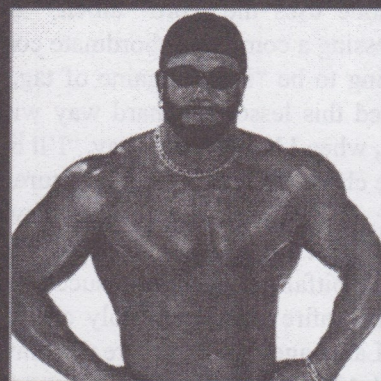
In much the same way, until fairly recently, the expression "make ends meet" existed in my lexicon as "make ends meat." When I learned my mistake, I was horrified not at my own ignorance, but at the sheer illogicality of the proper form. Make the ends of *what* meet? Bookends? Split ends? "The End of the Innocence" as Don Henley so poetically sang? It simply doesn't make any sense. In my interpretation, however, someone who can't make ends *meat* is so poor that they can't even afford the cheapest scrap meat, or said differently, ends meat.

The logic is so seamless that I've undertaken the project of campaigning to have the expression officially changed. Of course, as anyone who's been through college well knows, in order for a cause to gain any semblance of legitimacy, it must be expressed as a clever acronym. So in true activist fashion, I've decided to name my organization the League for the Abolishment of Meaningless Expression-Overexposure (LAME-O). Already, in the early stages of my campaign to popularize "make ends meat," I've enlisted the support of Henley, Macho Man Randy Savage (of SlimJim® fame), Sam the Butcher (the congenial yet slightly obtuse love interest of Alice on the *Brady Bunch*) and some drunk freshmen I picked up at the West End (an unabashed meat market) near Columbia University where I am a student.

Surely, we're quite the motley crew, but I figure that between my unwavering leadership, Henley's golden-throated loveliness, Macho Man's unrivaled neck muscles and perfectly oiled body, Sam's access to industrial-strength cutlery, and the drunk freshmen's willingness to follow unfamiliar and unattractive men home, our alliance is foolproof. Incidentally, if you'd like to pledge your support to our cause, send your credit card number along with the expiration date and your credit limit information to [jso9@columbia.edu](mailto:jso9@columbia.edu) with the words "I want to be a LAME-O...member" in the subject field. You will receive a confirmation of your membership in 2-3 weeks, depending on how fast I can make it to Mexico.

But I digress from the original focus of this column, which is to convince Safire that his weekly piece needs a substantial facelift. If I were in his shoes (I'll bet he has really fancy ones), that is, a well-respected contributor to a publication with a captive international audience, I'd realize my responsibility to write a more functional and practical column that reminds my readers that they live in a "dog eat dog world," and not a "doggy-dogg world," ruled by the embattled gangster rapper, who, incidentally, was "a flash in the pan," and not "a flashing the Pan."

Despite the hilarious, if somewhat disturbing mental image that results from picturing Snoop dropping his drawers in front of a pre-pubescent boy donning green tights, endowed with the ability to fly and a special fairy-friend named Tinker Bell, it would be my duty as a spokesperson for proper usage of



THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF LAME-O →



English to instill my readers with a better command of the greatest language in the world and dispel this popular myth about the English-speaking world's perverted obsession with Peter Pan.

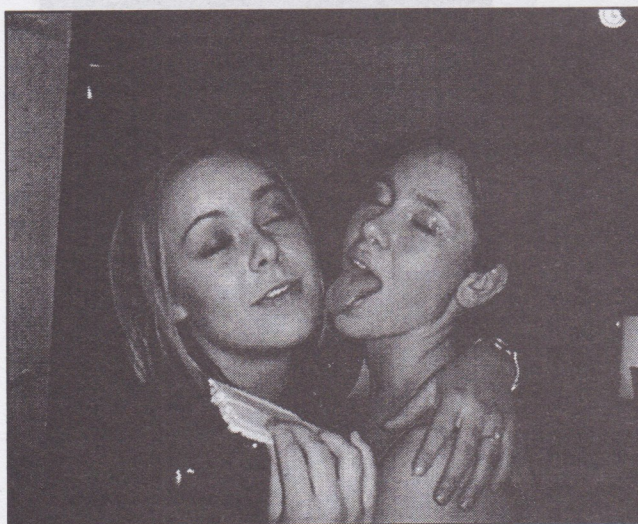
After reading my column, no one would have the excuse to conjure up a school of conscientious dolphins whenever someone starts a sentence with, "For all intents and purposes..." because they would have learned their mistake in hearing that common expression as "For all intensive porpoises." Granted, the intelligence of porpoises is well-documented, but that does not give the public the license to assume that they are all also diligent mammals. That's just plain silly.

Likewise, I would teach my readers that when someone uses the word "albeit," they are, in fact, expressing a complex subordinate conjunction and not offering to be "it" in a game of tag. I, unfortunately, learned this lesson the hard way with a professor of mine, when I heard him to say, "I'll be it," shoved him in the chest and ran out of the lecture hall.

Thus, my column would have a great preventative value in warning my readers against the embarrassing pitfalls I've been unsuccessful in avoiding, a benefit Safire cannot possibly claim to achieve with "On Language." So, if you're not brave enough to support LAME-O, please join me in appealing to Safire and let him know how terribly misguided his column really is. Even if you've never read it (I've never been able to read it in its entirety) your help is absolutely crucial. However, in your letters to the editor, please be careful to use only those expressions and idioms you know to be correct. As a service to those of you who will assist me in my cause, I've included the adjoining chart of commonly misheard expressions to guide you in your letters. If you should decide to help, I would forever be "indebted" to you and never "take you for granted." Thank you for your support. With our combined strength, we will be "tough as snails."

# Expression Chart

What it is	What you hear
"take it for granted"	"take it for granite"
"for all intents and purposes"	"for all intensive porpoises"
"by and large"	"by enlarge"
"make ends meet"	"make ends meat"
"so to speak"	"sew to speak"
"albeit"	"I'll be it"
"reap what you sow"	"rip what you sew"
"tough as nails"	"toughest snails"
"a flash in the pan"	"a'flashing 'the Pan"
"oncologist"	"on-call-ogist"
"one and the same"	"won in the sane"
"play it by ear"	"play it by year"
"excuse me while I kiss the sky"	"excuse me while I kiss this guy"
"canopy"	"can of pee"
"to be raring to go"	"to be rare: ink to go"
"it's a dog eat dog world"	"it's a doggy-dogg world"
"for kicks"	"four kicks"
"neck and neck"	"neck in neck"
"be indebted"	"being dead and..."
"in jest"	"ingest"
"look for a needle in a haystack"	"look for a neat little haystack"
"pull the rug out from under"	"pull the raga from under"

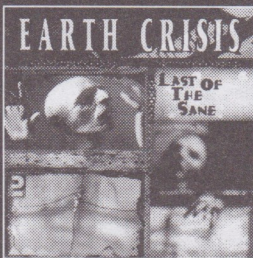


**Drunk Freshmen:**  
**← The latest recruits of**  
**LAME-O**

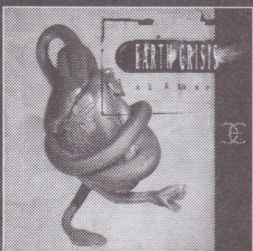


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# A Short Conversation With **Glasseater**

(This interview was done with Julio of Glasseater)

**Do you guys more strongly associate your band with hardcore or punk?**

I really don't see a reason in splitting up hardcore and punk, to me it's all the same. It started as the same thing and it has evolved into a bunch of different variations, but the heart, passion, energy and drive is (at least to us) still the same. Yes everyone grew up in the scene and still goes to hardcore/punk shows... it has driven us since we all got into music, we love it.

**When people ask you what your band sounds like, what do you say?**

A lot of kids ask us what style we like to be referred to as and it's simple... rock. All of us in Glasseater feel we can play real heavy stuff one minute, then go into a melodic phrase the next and we thrive on trying to make it mix as good as we can, 'cause in the end it's music, and it's what we love to do.

**How will you know that your band has "made it"?**

Ha! When we can be on the road 8 months out of the year and not have our parents and families bitching at us to have our bills paid.

**If you could hang out with anyone in the history of the world who would it be and what would you do together?**

I would hang out with my grandfather (daddy's dad). He was a mayor in a small city in Colombia (where my pops was born) and he was murdered when my dad was only 12 years old. To me I still think that if my dad would

have grown up with a father, my life would have been a lot different. But yeah my granddaddy would be a nice time.

**Tell me two trends in independent rock that need to die?**

Politics and Shit Talking

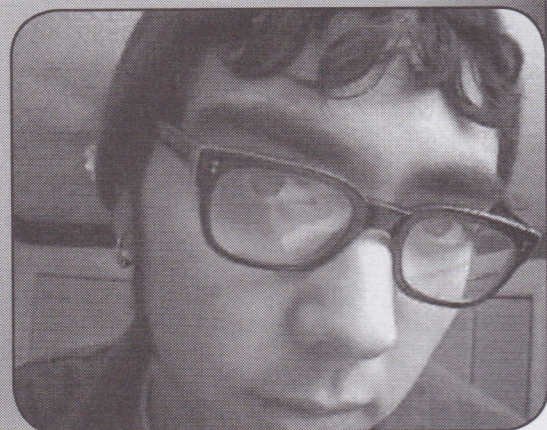
**If Madonna asked you to babysit her children would you? Would you raid her 'fridge? How much would you charge an hour?**

She has more than one kid? Wow. Nah I'd break into her room and get into her contact book, then I'd look up her drummer's number (Omar Hakim) and try to have a nice, long conversation with him, he's hot shit! I'd charge 20 bucks an hour, just cause she's Madonna doesn't mean I am going to give her special rates.

**What are your three favorite records ever to come out of the south Florida music scene?**

Cynic' "Focus," Shai Hulud's "Hearts Once..." and N'sync's "No strings attached" (that shit is awesome!)

by Ross



## 10 Minutes with **NORA**

(This interview was done with Carl of Nora and Ferret Records)

**What is the difference between hardcore and metal as you see it?**

Hardcore to me is like a mindset, an idealism. Metal is a type of music. Hardcore doesn't have a sound to me, it's got a feeling, it's aggressive and progressive but it don't have a definitive sound. Metal is fucking metal. Metal has always had a strong influence in the various hardcore sounds over the years, right now it's really strong. I love that shit.

**Is Winona Ryder your band's mascot? If she called you up and asked to be put on the guest list for a show would you do it? If so, what would you do if she loved the band and told you so?**

Winona? Nope. I mean when I was in high school and she was doing shit like Heathors and Welcome Home Roxy Carmichael and whatnot I was way into her. If she wanted to come to a show I'd still shit. If she hated us I wouldn't be too surprised. It's not like we are easy listening or anything. If she loved us? I'd pretty much spend all my time telling people she loved us. Like my friend's band just found out that Fred Durst's Mom loves them, not Fred, but his mom. How cool is that?

**Why don't you release Nora on your own label, Ferret Records?**

I didn't want to be that guy that released his own band. Plus, Josh runs one of the best labels in hardcore (next to Ferret). His shit is everywhere. He's really been good to us. You know, he's my best friend so we never asked him to do it, didn't want to put him in the position of telling me he thought we sucked. So we just left it alone. When he did ask us, I think it went something like "Hey, maybe I should put out your shitty band's full length or something." I knew that joke never would have been made if he hadn't thought about it a lot and especially if he didn't honestly really enjoy the music.

**What do you tell people when they ask what your band sounds like?**

I usually stumble through some band explanation of "its like heavy and fast and kinda metally or something." Because I really don't know. I know we aren't like breaking any crazy new ground but I think we've got our own thing going on. It'll really come out on the full length. It's going to be something special (yes, that's right, we're fucking special).

**Does Nora ever make you feel like a success? If so, how?**

NORA is one of the best things to ever happen to me. I spend tons of time with some of the coolest people on the earth, I travel all over with them and we can drive into a town in Canada or Germany and play to kids that know our music and my lyrics. That's huge. It makes me feel amazing everytime we play. We have received comments from people after shows that have just left me feeling totally complete. Without a question my life is better for being in this band with these people.

**Top 3 records ever to come out of New Jersey?**

Deadguy's "Fixation on a Coworker," Lifetime's "Jersey's Best Dancers," and Endeavor's "Crazy as a Shithouse Rat." Period.

Photos and Interview by Ross





# Picking the brain of



# Hanging Like a Hex

*(This interview was done with Ryan of Hanging Like a Hex Magazine)*

**What the hell does the name of your zine mean?**

It actually comes from an old Clutch song. I thought of it years ago, and had a list of zine names that I liked before I changed the name of the zine to what it is now. I just thought it was a cool sounding collection of words, and it doesn't really represent anything, but it has come to mean a curse or omen of sorts. If you can name the Clutch song it comes from, or the old name of this zine you will get something free from me, or at least a lot of scene points.

**What is your least favorite thing about doing a zine? What is your most favorite? When do you quit and get a life?**

The least favorite part of doing a zine is waiting for people to get you things they said they would, whether it be ads, columns, or reviews. I'm a patient person, but my patience only goes so far, and it drives me nuts waiting on that stuff. My favorite part of doing this zine is when I start coming up with ideas for the next issue and I start brainstorming them. It's a very exciting feeling, and one of the coolest parts of actually going through and doing stuff like this. As for me getting a life, I think I have one, but if it weren't for this publication, and everything associated with it, I probably wouldn't... and that's sort of sad.

**How did you get to be so cool?**

Well, that's a good question. See, I tell a lot of people I got my degree in psychology, but in actuality, I majored in coolness in college. Yes, it's true. I mean, I only graduated with a 2.0, so I'm not that cool. But technically I have the certificate, so I rule.

**Have you ever gotten laid because you do a zine? Has anyone on your staff (been laid because they work on your zine)?**

I actually did start a relationship based on the zine in a way because me and a girl started talking because I gave her a copy, and she would ask me about it a lot, and we ended up going out for a while. Pretty wild huh? I wish that happened more. And of course, I'm always beating off the girls with a stick because of this. Don't you have to Ross?! To everyone reading: doing a zine is a chick magnet... really. No kidding.. serious. My "staff" often uses it as a pick-up line, and the girls say, "who?"

**Would you live off your zine and record label if you could?**

I'm not sure. I imagine I would have to think way more about money and dedicate a lot more of my time to that, and it would compromise the time I use for the creative end, which is my favorite part. So it's a tough call because of course it would be nice, but I suppose I prefer the "starving artist" route in a sense.

**Describe your average reader. Now describe your intended average reader?**

My average reader probably lives in Anywhere, USA, though a lot of them seem to be in Massachussetts for some reason. They probably like a very eclectic variety of music, and like silly pop culture shit like me. My intended reader is the same person. I just wish there were more of them!

**Top 3 records ever to come out of Syracuse?**

My absolute favorite records to come out of this area I'd have to say Spark Lights the Friction's "Cocaine Honeymoon" (I put it out, I can say that!), the Farthest Man demo, and the Order Of Deceit demo.

[hanginghex@hotmail.com](mailto:hanginghex@hotmail.com)

by Ross

## Eastern Youth

*(This interview was conducted with Hisashi Yoshino of Eastern Youth)*

**What has it been like touring with At-The Drive In?**

I would like to thank ATDI for giving us the best situation possible for our very first performances in the United States. Their performances were just awesome. It seems to me like the band and their fans really understand each other, and their fans are moved by the band's attitude. They talk to the crowd about what they believe is right and wrong.

**Is it hard for you to communicate with the crowds due to your lack of English? Do you think that music bridges language barriers?**

I am not ashamed of not being able to speak English, but I feel that I need a common language to become friends. I would have liked to talk with a lot more people at shows. In Japan, we really have no language barriers in terms of listening to music. We don't understand what bands that sing in English are talking about, but we don't care about that. We just keep listening to music from all over the world.

**Did you eat any American versions of Japanese food while in the states? What's the major difference from traditional Japanese cuisine?**

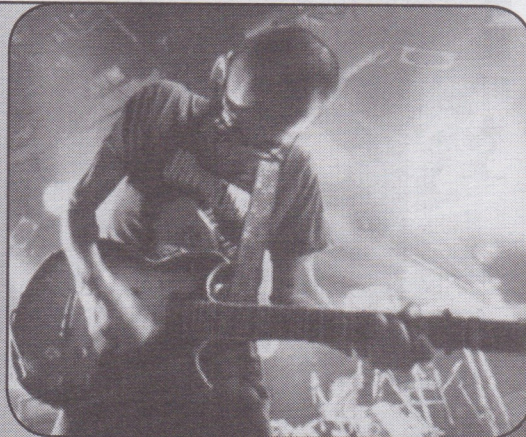
I ate a beef bowl at Yoshino-Ya. It was very good. It tasted same as in Japan, except they used a different type of rice. California rice is a bit longer, but it is good too.

**What is the scene like in Japan right now? What is the response like when you play in Japan? Are women throwing themselves at your feet?**

I think the scene in Japan is becoming interesting. I see more diverse styles of music around, especially in the indie scene. You see a lot of women throwing themselves here.

**Do you like Guns N' Roses? Do you think Axl is destroying the GN'R legacy?**

I have never been interested in Guns N' Roses. Sorry, I don't have any comment to your question.



**What are the main differences, as you see them, between Japan and America? Would you ever consider relocating the band to the U.S.?**

If I had to point out any differences between Japan and US, it would be the prevalence of traditional Japanese customs, since Japan is not a multi-race country. I can't imagine myself living in US, but if I had to choose one city to live in it would be San Francisco. I also like New York because it reminds me of the urban chaos in Tokyo. Any place other than LA would be fine.

by Jonah



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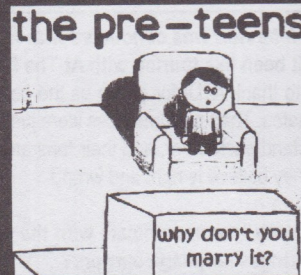
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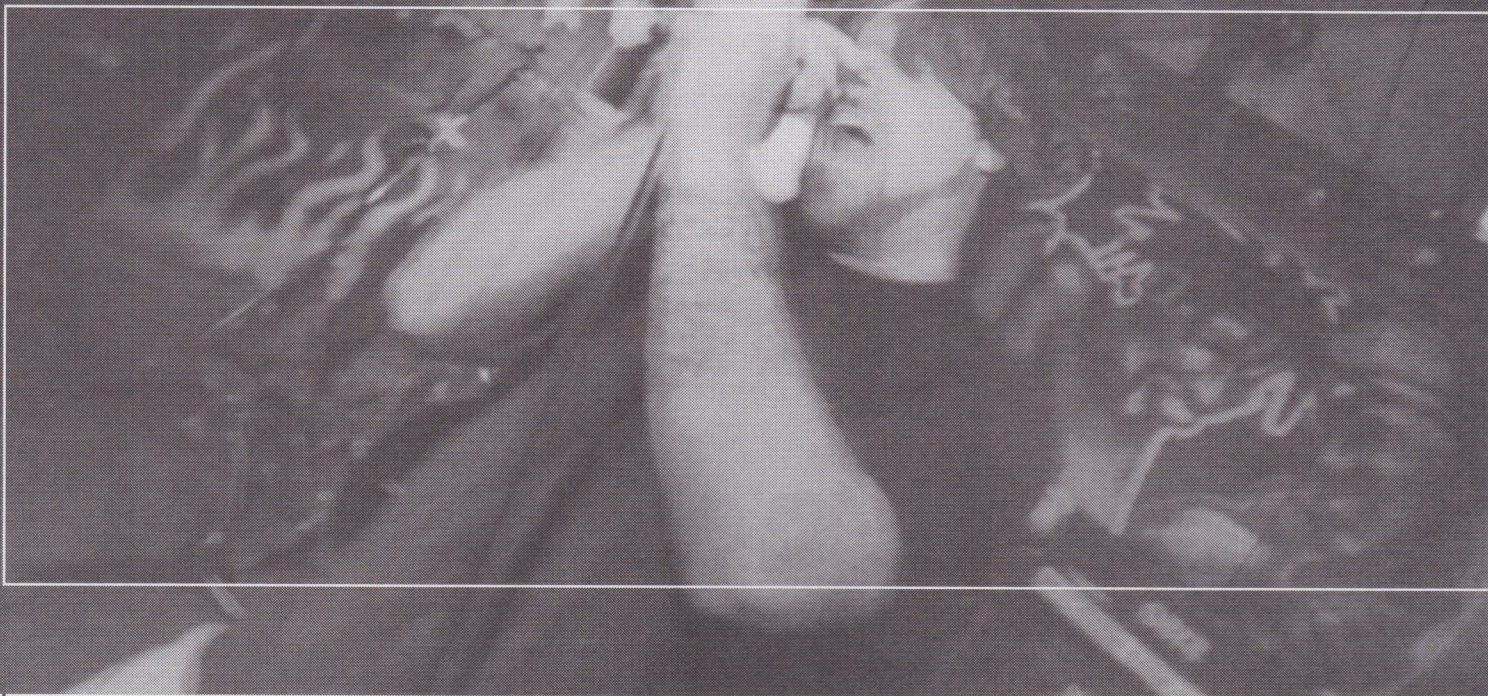




# This Year's Model

by Ross





I first heard This Year's Model through a friend who suggested I check out their demo CD that had been circling the nation this past summer. I did and was instantly impressed at their ability to take hardcore, indie, and plain old-fashioned rock and roll and mix it seamlessly into each song. I was even more impressed when I found out that this band has ex-members of Sons of Abraham-- the late great metalcore act from Long Island-- in it as This Year's Model was completely different than Sons. I got in touch with Neil, the band's consistently outspoken singer, and he suggested I catch at show of theirs on Long Island a month or so later. I did, and witnessed a truly intense live show that combined attitude with great body-shaking music, sure to please even the most staunch anti-hardcore people. As I've gotten to know the individual members of the band I've found that not only are they some of the nicest, most loyal and sincere individuals I've met in a long time, but they were also very different from one another. Normally, I try very hard to keep Law of Inertia Records and Law of Inertia Magazine entirely separate entities in order to maintain objectivism, but in this case I had to make an exception. I had to find an excuse to sit down with these four people and find out what makes them tick. What I found is not necessarily anything I hadn't known before, but rather reinforcement for my attraction to this band as musicians and people. You will see in this interview that the members of This Year's Model not only shoot from the hip, but are fun and goofy as well. This was one of the most interesting interviews I've ever done on a personal level, because for once I wasn't interviewing people I stared at in awe on stage, but people I have come to consider friends and compatriots. In a music scene filled with pretense and compromised dreams, it is clear to me that This Year's Model want nothing to do with bogus claims of stardom.

Okay, state your name and your role in the band.

**Karen:** I'm Karen and I play bass.

**Steve:** Steve, guitar.

**Joe:** Joe, drums.

**Neil:** I refuse to answer these typical boring questions from idiots.

I'm trying to set a stage so people that don't know you in Montana can figure out who you are.

**Neil:** I was talking to my friend Matt and he said that when people ask him stupid questions in interviews instead of answering them he just goes: "ehhhh."

**Hopefully, that won't happen in this interview then. How did you guys and girl meet and how did you come to start This Year's Model?**

**Steve:** Me and Karen were in a band before this called In Transit. And, towards the end of that I wanted to play guitar again 'cause I played drums in that band. So I got together with Karen and Joe Hess—who also played guitar with me, but is no longer in the band—and I picked up the guitar again. We got Neil, 'cause he wasn't doing anything at the time, and put out an ad for a drummer. That's not how we got a drummer, but we did take out an ad.

**Neil:** We got one drummer and he spontaneously combusted, and then we got another drummer and he spontaneously combusted too, and then we got Joe and we're waiting for him to spontaneously combust.

**Steve:** Somewhere along the line we all knew Joe and he joined.

**Neil:** Joe was in a band on my label called Last Days of August and they had just recently broken up so I invited him to sit in on a couple of sessions. Me and Steve played together in a band called Irony of Lightfoot and then our bassist played with Joe in their band and Steve played with Karen in his band, etc.

**But, that's sort of how the Long Island scene works, though. Like, everyone plays in everyone else's band, right?**

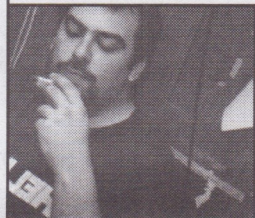
**Neil:** Like the '88 hardcore stuff where Side by Side and Youth of Today and Gorilla Biscuits were all virtually the same members just with different names.

**If This Year's Model has a political message or political messages, what are they?**

**Steve:** While we're at a DIY fest. [the location of the interview: a DIY fest at the Wetlands in New York City- ed.]

**Karen:** Do yourself it?

**Steve:** Oh no, I was thinking of





DRI. Where the hell are we? (laughter)

**Neil:** Our political message is this: if it weren't for the band DRI, skaters and BMX riders would never get along. (laughter)

**Steve:** You'll have to ask Neil, he's the one with the politics.

**Joe:** That could be an interview in itself: Neil's politics.

**Okay let me rephrase that: do the individual members of the band have politics that they might want to get across? Or, does the band simply exist for the sake of making music.**

**Steve:** We kind of just want to play music for the sake of playing music for what we want to do. I know certain people in the band like having controversy, 'cause without a little bit of controversy everything else is just dull. Sometimes even if that controversy is just going up to people and smacking them in the face. You've got to have that smack in the face so people will be like, "that was so retarded." It may be stupid to smack someone in the face but it serves a point and that point is keeping this interesting and keeping the music inherently threatening. That's what our scene lacks now. We've got controversy in a mean sort of way, but there's nothing for kids to talk about after the show is over. It's just music right now. We want to make punk shocking right now, and Long Island is not like that today.

**Does that mean you guys wouldn't listen to, say, a pop punk band because they're not shocking?**

**Neil:** Before you answer that, Steve, just keep in mind that we are four totally individual people in this band and few of ideas that come up overlap from person to person.

**Joe:** It's a good point, but I think we want to shock people on a mental level, not on a smack-you-in-the-face level.

**Steve:** We don't have the budget for costumes and make-up either. (laughter) I'd listen to pop-punk in a second if it was creative and interesting, but I've listened to a hundred bands this year that are all doing take-offs of other bands.

**So you're saying that you like to be original?**

**Steve:** I wouldn't say that we're the most original band as far as music goes. I think we're a very good band that has very good music, but are we trying to re-invent the wheel? No. Are we trying to make that wheel more provocative? Yes, most definitely. I think the stuff we do might have been done by other bands before, but it hasn't been done by us four together, and that's the important thing.

**Neil:** If you listen to all the things we listen to on a regular basis, not individually because individually our tastes are very different, but if you listen to the music we all have in common then you'd be like, "aw fuck, you guys aren't original at all!"

**Do you get your views from any one place in particular?**

**Steve:** I think we have things we all sync up on, vaguely, but it's all about putting our own personal touches on anything we try to say or do. Sometimes I don't even think we know what we're trying to get across... and that's why we are a good band and why one could argue that we're a pretty interesting band to listen to.

**Do you guys think you are succeeding in trying to shock people?**

**Neil:** I don't think we're shocking simply for any kind of shock value, if that's all it is. Instead, I think we're doing something slightly off-kilter and in a certain narrow-minded environment, which much of the punk scene is, then it is shocking. We're not necessarily that different from everything else in the world, but we're definitely different from what's going on in emo or pop-punk. I think the kids with sweater-vests and black glasses would find us shocking, and maybe your typical hardcore kids would see us as a bit more threatening than your average heavy band, but I don't think we scare anyone or anything like that. (laughter)

**Do you guys think you are doing something completely different in Long Island?**

**Steve:** Yes. Definitely. Long Island is turning into pop-music central. I don't think there's anything in Long Island right now—maybe since Milhouse or

Mind Over Matter—that is shocking. People are looking outside of Long Island 'cause there's nothing threatening here anymore.

**What about your friends, like Silent Majority and the Glassjaw and stuff like that. Do you think they're doing something shocking?**

**Neil:** I think the Glassjaw is one of the most amazing bands around today. Period. I think what they're doing is great. I think they're some of the most amazing musicians. I think Darryl does stir up some controversy in the things he says. The scene we're in is very PC, and not necessarily in a realistic way. Steve used the word "retarded" before. God forbid the PC kids that come see us read this interview and tear us apart for being handicapped-phobic. (laughter) The Glassjaw says things that aren't cool to say and they get lots of shit for it.

**Neil, do you actively try to stir up controversy at your shows? Or, does it just come out in who you are?**

**Neil:** I usually don't try to piss people off. I'm just obnoxious and the things I say don't fly with some people.

**Steve:** I think some people put more controversy into what Neil says than what Neil puts into it.

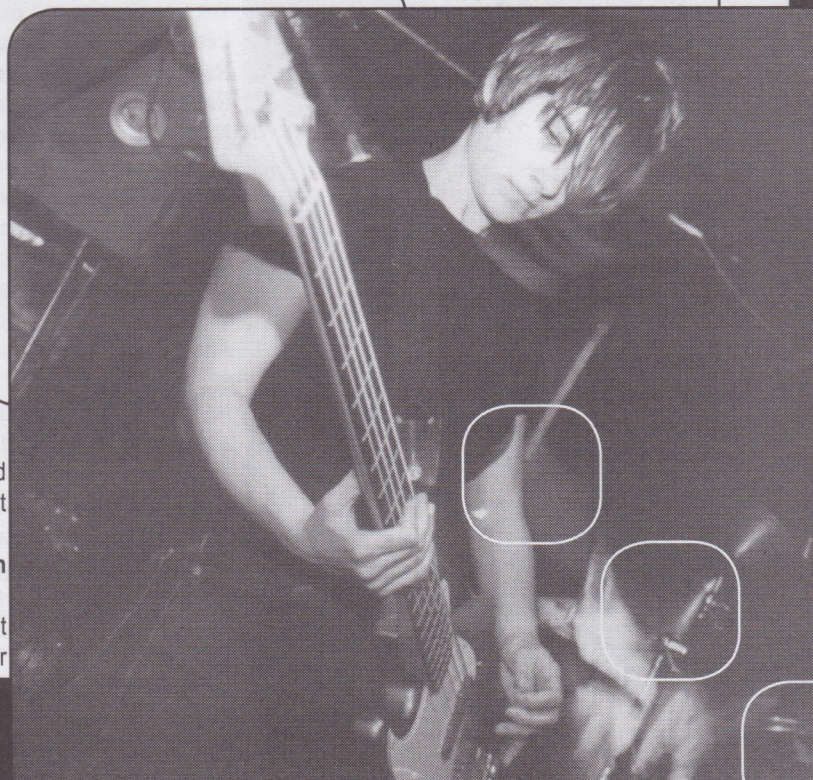
**Is the Long Island scene stagnating? Is it not going anywhere?**

**Steve:** I think there are some bands out there in specific genres that are really good and may be pushing the boundaries of what hardcore is musically, but that's it. It's just interesting music and no guts. Glassjaw I think is different in that respect. Darryl's lyrics are really cool but they're also very out there. Those two things combined: the lyrical content and the music of Glassjaw make them a great band.

**So, how do you guys fit into Long Island?**

**Neil:** I don't know. It's where we're from so obviously we've got the background. But, I don't necessarily identify with Long Island as a unit. The scene has a lot of great bands like Brand New, and the Movielife, Silent Majority, VOD, and the Stryder. We're another step, we're another one of those bands. If you want to lump us all in as Long Island bands that's fine, but where we're coming from and where we're going is very different. And you can tell that in that we don't sound anything like any of those bands.

**Obviously, I like your band. That goes without saying. But when you say you're not doing anything totally original I have to disagree with you. I think there are few bands that I listen to on a regular basis that are doing the same thing you are.**







**Joe:** We're doing something that's not popular right now, but that doesn't mean we invented the style. We didn't invent mid-tempo hardcore with melodic overtones.

**Neil:** There are bands we are directly influenced by that clearly laid the foundations for what we're doing. Like Heroin, Rye Coalition, Mule, Jesus Lizard. Stuff like that.

**Who is Mule?**

**Neil:** Exactly.

**Steve:** Since we're in the band and we're around it all the time it doesn't seem original. But, for someone who doesn't know us or has never heard our stuff before our music may be totally different and creative.

**When you guys play to a new crowd in a new town and no one there has ever heard This Year's Model before, what is the reaction?**

**Steve:** I think they are accepting a lot of times. We get 5 or 6 people that will walk off outside right off the bat. But, most people are into checking out what we're doing. At the very least 'cause we're on Law of Inertia. (laughter)

**Why do you think that is—that 5 or 6 people will walk away when you get on stage?**

**Karen:** Everyone judges a band by how they look, because they think that's an indication of how they prepare themselves and how they sound. People see us and instantly think we don't fit the style of music they're into, so they leave. If you can manage to capture people's interest on more than just what you look like, then potentially you can make a real fan who's in it for the right reasons.

**Like, if you guys don't have those spock-rock haircuts or dress in all black then you must not be cool.**

**Steve:** Right! And, we sure as hell don't have cool haircuts or cool clothes.

**Neil:** Most of the time I don't even shave before a show. People are narrow minded and think that if you do have that spock-rock cut and jean-jacket then you sound like the Locust, if you have the basketball jersey you sound like Hatebreed, and if you have a cardigan on then you sound like the Promise Ring. Not only do we not sound like any of those bands but we are more than happy to wear grungey T-shirts and jeans on stage. If you're lucky you might see us sport some New Balance, but no hip new fashions for us. People look at us when we get up on stage and see that we don't care what we look like and they think it must not be interesting. We don't really fit into a scene, a style, or a look so people tend to disregard us. It sucks but it's true.

**Speaking of not fitting in, do you guys think that where the indie music scene is in early 2001, it's a tough time to be on the aggressive side of the spectrum musically?**

**Neil:** I think there are levels of aggressive rock. If you're a new metal band right now, well sorry but that passed. To hop on that train right now is going to be really fucking tough. If you're like a classic rock arena band then you're in the right place 'cause that's about to happen. Then there's the At the Drive-in train which is pulling through right in the middle and those guys will rock your socks off. But, the arena rock thing is the next thing in aggressive rock.

**So are you guys going to suddenly switch your sound and become the next Boston?**

**Neil:** We are! (laughter) Our sound is so close to Journey that sometimes people mistake us for them. We love Skynyrd and Blue Oyster Cult.

**I can't believe I just put out a band on my label that would rather be playing "Don't Fear the Reaper" than "One Armed Scissor." (much laughter) Let's talk about this anti-fashion thing.**

**Neil is always telling me that This Year's Model is anti-fashion. What's up with that?**

**Neil:** I'm an anti-great-looking band. I don't like great-looking bands.

**So, if Karen wore mini-skirts and Steve....**

**Steve:** If Steve were more than 90 pounds.

**Neil:** She's not like those people. If she ever does that it's because she's feeling pretty today, not because that's what's hip. We don't ever need that—ever—it's not about looks it's about what we're playing. If a kid can't get past what we look like to enjoy the music then he's not bright enough to understand us and we don't want him to understand us.

**And you don't mind that you might be sacrificing a lot of fans just because they're superficial and you're not?**

**Neil:** No we don't mind. Music is the number one focus of This Year's Model and we don't want to be a fashion trend. We want to make great music that sells itself. We don't want my gorgeous face to sell us.

**Joe:** If that were the case no one would ever come to see us. (laughter)

**Neil:** If you don't take chances with your music, like sign to a label, or try to get as many people as possible to hear you then you're selling your band short. We do not want to do this. But we do not want to take the easy way out and have people buy our stuff or come see us just because we look good. That's selling out to me.



**Steve:** Also, we're not going to fit a sound or an image of what is hip or what people want us to sound like or what could potentially make us famous just because we'd get a good tour out of it or sell 10,000 records.

**Karen:** We would do terribly on a major label, because as soon as they started telling us to "wear this, sound like this, and be like this" then we'd quit. It wouldn't mean as much to us then.

**Neil:** But, if one day we wake up and say, "you know, let's start playing more metal" and we all agree that that's where we want to go, then I would have no trouble reinventing ourselves.

**Do you think that in some ways not giving into what the public wants is not selling out, but rather selling short?**

**Neil:** Well Fugazi didn't and those guys sell tons of records. More importantly they are totally steadfast in their beliefs of only doing exactly what they want to do and not giving into what the masses want. That's rare, though, 'cause I've never seen four people as like-minded as those people that stay successful and friends for such a long period of time.

**Karen:** Selling out is compromising yourself because you mentally tell yourself that you want to reach a certain level of success. Selling out is personal. No one can tell you that just because you changed your sound or grew as a band that that means the music is just a means to success and nothing more for you.

**A lot of bands rationalize their selling out by claiming they want their message out to every kid in America. Like Rage Against the Machine.**

**Karen:** My feelings on that is that people who want to hear the message will seek it out. They will look. Your average kid in America who listens to Rage Against the Machine more often than not likes that band because they like their music more than their politics.

**Steve:** If they think their message will best be disseminated through signing to Sony then that's fine. That's not selling out. It may be a bit ironic but it's not selling out. We are obviously no Rage Against the Machine, but I understand their motives.

**So what do you look for when you listen to music?**

**Neil:** I look for music that makes me go, "shit I want to do that!" Stuff that is shocking and in your face and makes me feel uncomfortable.

**Steve:** I look for bands that obviously have very strong, opinionated members who all seem to know what to give and what to take from the band. The fact is, we are all strong people who have opinions on everything....

**Neil:** As everyone should be, ideally....

**Steve:** Right. We all have our own opinions on everything, but we know when not to impose ourselves on someone else in the band. I know when to let Karen do her thing on bass and trust Joe to know that he is playing the best possible fill for that part of the song. We are four totally different people, who are also relatively like-minded, or about as like-minded as four strong and different people can be.

**Neil:** And there have been quite a few times that lesser friends, musicians, people, or what have you, would have broken up in.



**Karen:** We are doing this to play music and not be famous. If we could play as our jobs or tour the country for the whole year then we'd do it. But, first and foremost we want to be playing music with friends. And, if we weren't in a band right now that is trying to make it we would happily be just playing in our basement to our four friends. We just want to play music more than anything. That's the main set of politics for This Year's Model.

**When does this whole hardcore dream stop? When does Karen stop taking money out of her life-insurance, when does Steve resume his job as an exterminator, when does Joe keep doing what he's doing, when does Neil get a career?**

**Steve:** I don't think we ever have to stop doing what we're doing. There's no reason why we have to suddenly get serious and stop playing music. We may not be able to tour or play as often as we'd like, but there's no reason we have to give up our dreams... ever.

**Neil:** Case in point. The other night I went to a party....

**Steve:** Last Saturday night....

**Neil:** Didn't get laid, but got into a fight. Un-huh, it ain't no big thing. (much laughter) I went to a party the other night and we're all hanging out. Some people are drinking beer and smoking. We're watching a Radiohead video and everyone stops and starts talking. People were like, "Yo, I saw them and he played that descending scale he plays there, but he played it backwards." Or, "he bends that string and hits that note when he could just hit that other note much easier, why is he doing that?" Blah blah blah. We were analyzing everything Radiohead did. And I realized at that moment that we're all a bunch of fucking geeks. And, I am so not healthy socially. All I give a shit about is music. I go to work and put on CDs. The girls from the floor come back to the stock room and we say, "what kind of music do you listen to?" Their response is "I don't know" or "whatever is on the radio." And that fucking baffles me. We give a shit about the art the way a person reading this zines gives a shit about the art. If you're reading a fanzine then you're a fucking geek. If all you give a shit about is what bands have to say then you're a loser... just like us. Who cares about what string the dude from Radiohead hit? The other day I went to a music store and got excited about a vibra-slap. Who gives a shit what a vibra-slap is? We do.

**Steve:** Well, you do. (laughter)

**Neil:** But because of that, I will never stop doing this. I don't have or know or care or want anything else. If it's not this band it's my label, if it's not my label it's a fanzine, and the list goes on. That's the way everyone in the band feels and that's the way I want it to be forever. I'm going to be rocking on stage till I'm 40, 'cause that's who I am-- that's who we are.

**Steve:** If we weren't doing a band we'd all be doing something related to music. Joe would be that guy you asked weird sound questions, I'd do recording, Neil would run a label or something.

**Karen:** And, I'd join the circus.

**Any last words?**

**Neil:** One fan at a time, baby. No seriously, you know how people say if you get to one person then it's worth it? I always thought that was a crock of shit. It's not, it's true. Those three kids around the country that write me and tell me how they first heard of us and tell me they love us make the whole fucking thing worth. When someone discovers our work, or our past work, and they tell you they love your stuff and that what we do is *amazing*... there is no better feeling in the world. I'd give up sex for the rest of my life if I knew I'd have that feeling forever.

**Check out their website @ [Thisyearsmodel.net](http://Thisyearsmodel.net)**

**Photos by Mike Dubin**





# Angels in the Architecture

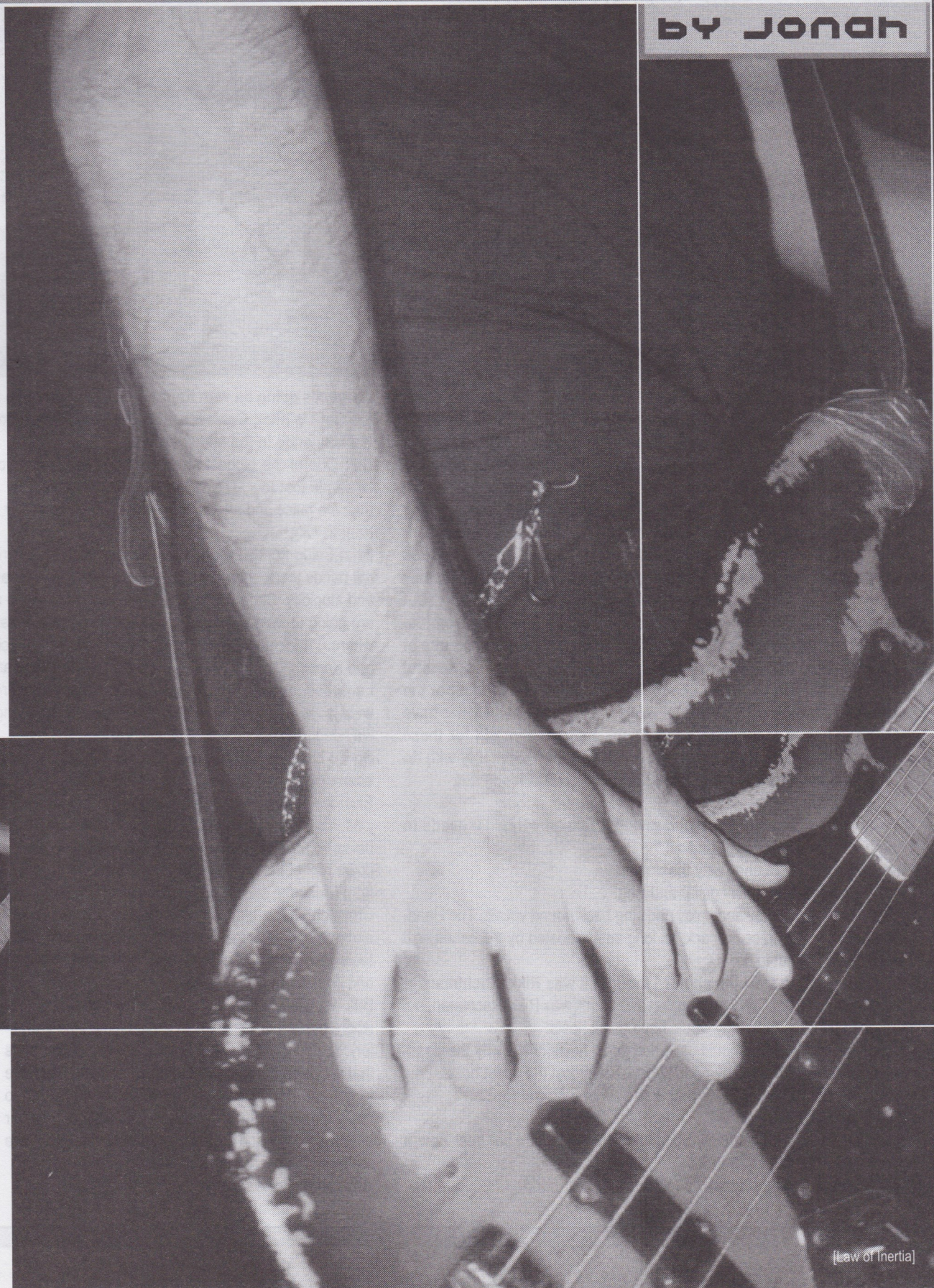
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# THE ULTIMATE F0KEB00K

BY JONAH







I can only speak for myself, but I had never heard the words "ultimate" and "fakebook" in the same sentence, prior to Ultimate Fakebook's nationwide tour with The Get-up Kids a few years back. While I usually don't pay attention to opening bands, something about Ultimate Fakebook's infectious power-pop ditties really impressed me, and I have enjoyed watching this band progress from the "unknown opening act" to headliners of a recent U.S. tour. As cliché as it sounds, it couldn't have happened to a nicer bunch of guys. Ultimate Fakebook has built a solid fanbase the old-fashioned way- by touring relentlessly for a majority of their four-year existence (and selling their Epic debut for virtually the same amount it costs the band to buy them from the label.) What struck me the most about these guys during the course of our interview, is that while they are blossoming into a very successful rock band, they remain a hell of a lot less pretentious than most of the bands in the indie-rock genre (including many of the bands that have graced the pages of this fine publication). Keep an eye out for these guys, and when they come to your town (which they inevitably will) do yourself a favor and go to the show. It's rock n' roll at it's finest.

**Let's start by introducing you and giving a reason why MTV needs to bring back the "Headbanger's Ball."**

**Eric:** I'm Eric Bemean and I play the drums.

**Bill:** I'm Bill McShane, I play guitar and sing.

**Nick:** And I'm Nick Colby and I play and sing background vocals. The Headbanger's Ball needs to come back, as long as it is hosted by the bands as it was originally set out to do.

**The bands used to start the show? I thought it was Rikki Rachtman?**

**Eric:** They had Adam Curry hosting first and then it was Rikki Rachtman, but if they weren't there then they would have guest hosts.

**Nick:** I think they always should have had guest hosts, that's why the Headbanger's Ball isn't around anymore, because they lost the guest hosts.

**Once Rikki cut his hair I think that was sort of a signal for...**

**Nick:** The downfall

**Eric:** The problem is that if they brought the Headbanger's ball back now, it would be all Korn and Limp Bizkit.

**Bill:** I definitely don't want that. (laughter)

**So what's going on with Kansas? Why are there so many bands like the Get-Up Kids, Coalesce, and The Anniversary coming out of this unlikely state in the Midwest?**

**Bill:** One of the biggest reasons is that the bands you mentioned are all bands that tour. They all went on the road so they all met people all over the place and after a while it doesn't really matter that you are from Kansas City.

**Eric:** Being from Kansas is unusual because there's not a lot of rock n' roll bands there, therefore doing it requires a certain amount of passion and stupidity. Once you realize that there are only so many people that are going to watch you at home then you need to go away and go elsewhere. I think a lot of bands from the midwest, especially from Kansas and Kansas City are used to that. We did the circuit around Manhattan, Lawrence, and Kansas City for about a year. We were doing little mid-west jaunts every now and then, but it didn't take us long to figure out that we needed to get out and play everywhere.

**So it's because the scene is smaller? I had always assumed that the scene there was huge.**

**Eric:** It's still not huge really and so many people are tied down by day jobs. It's really hard to make that step to get out. The greatest thing about being from Kansas is that we can go anywhere. We can do a month and cover half of the country, then come back home. We don't have to leave from California and go on this long two-month tour just to get to the East Coast and back. It's worked out well. We've been touring since January and we've been home 4 days or a week, at a time. We can do these short tours and cover a lot of area and then come back home take a little break and go right back out again.

**Bill:** Basically we're describing how we live somewhere that we just wanted to leave all the time (laughter). Yeah, there's not really a scene there so the bands that are there are really in it for the long haul-they have to get out. It's not like the coasts where you have so many bands and so many people who just get together after two shows and are signed or whatever. Bands are really working hard in the midwest.

**Any crazy stories from the tour so far?**





**Nick:** Oh, Friday the thirteenth...

**Bill and Eric:** Oh jeez...

**Bill:** Yeah, last Friday in Austin the 13<sup>th</sup> we played this awesome show in Austin Texas. It was our first show that we ever played there where we packed the place.

**Eric:** It was the first full moon on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> in a million years or something. (laughter)

**Bill:** We got done with the show and normally club guys are shuffling kids out the door like "alright you need to go!" Well, this was a little different because I hear this "You need to go, there is a national emergency. You need to go. There's been a homicide." Evidently, right outside the club there was a huge fight and someone ended up getting stabbed and killed. The guy that did it also stabbed a cop, so they blocked off the entire three-block radius and there were homicide police everywhere, it was like Law & Order...

**Eric:** We had to load out through the yellow police tape

**Nick:** We had all our equipment just laid out in the alleyway and as we were loading it in the cops were like "How long is it gonna be before until you're out of here?"

**Eric:** And we've got a rental on this tour so we're not used to packing it quite yet because it's a new van, so it took us forever (laughter)

**Bill:** It was just the craziest, let's-get-the-hell-out-of-here situation ever.

**Eric:** That was almost the best show too though. It was such a great show.

**Bill:** Yeah, it was a great show. I am really glad that the guy was nice enough to kill the other guy after the show so that we could play. (laughter)

**How was playing with Mustard Plug and the Blue Meanies because they seem like unlikely bands for you to play with. How did the ska kids react to your band?**

**Nick:** The shows were really good and those guys were really nice to us but one show in particular we had about fifty hardcore ska kids in the middle of the crowd flipping us off

**Bill:** Actually they were flipping Nick off.

**Nick:** Well, they were flipping us all off, so I returned the favor. But I was doing it jokingly, I was having a good time and I was kind of playing it up like "Oh Yeah." And it pissed them off and they all sat down in the middle of the floor cross-legged like in protest. We thought it was funny! (laughs).

**How did the deal with Epic happen? Do you have the typical stories where you were courted and taken out to fancy dinners by the all the labels?**

**Eric:** They didn't take us out to dinner one time before they signed us! (laughter) Basically, a guy from Epic saw us in New York City like three or four times and we didn't even know he was there. We started playing New York, every time we went out and kept coming back and playing all the different clubs. Finally people started to notice and we were just playing and he was there and all a sudden we heard, "by the way, this guy has seen you guys three or four times and he's gonna come see you in Kansas City," and he just offered it to us that night.

**Bill:** It worked out well because we'd had lots of different offers floating around so we got to sit down and look at everything at once. From there, it was three months of hardcore negotiations with lawyers and all that boring stuff to work everything out. But as far as the initial "how did we get signed," it just kind of happened.

**What are the positive and negative aspects of being on a major?**

**Eric:** Distribution is the biggest aspect for us. We've never had that before. Even with our independent records, the label we were on Noise-some in Lawrence, had some distribution but it really wasn't that big. So

we were selling most of our CD's at our shows and online and that was it. People would constantly ask us where they could get our CD. Sometimes we would be irresponsible and be sold out of CD's at a show and then people would be disappointed. We really started to feel the fact that people couldn't get our music if they wanted it, so that's the best thing about Epic for sure. The worst thing is probably the fact that our CD is \$16.99 at some places...

**Eric:** We're used to selling them at shows for \$10.

**Bill:** And we still do. We made sure we could sell them on the road when we signed the deal and everything but we're basically giving them away on tour.

**Eric:** We never expected to make any money off the record. We just wanted it to be as many places as possible, so that anybody that wanted it could pick it up.

**Bill:** It's definitely a different way of doing things. There's some corporate things that get a little strange to deal with but we'll see where it goes...We want to take over the world, we'll just see. We want to fuckin' play stadiums!

**Eric:** I would love to play stadiums, I want to get a drum set that goes upside down like Tommy Lee.

**Do you feel weird about being on a major label since you play with predominantly indie bands?**

**Bill:** No. There's never really been any strangeness at all.

**Nick:** There are actually a lot of people who actually support us, a lot of people that liked us before who are really excited for us to be on a major doing our thing.

**Eric:** Anybody that would have had any attitude or weirdness about it pretty much disappears when we play. When they see that we're just doing the same thing we did before.

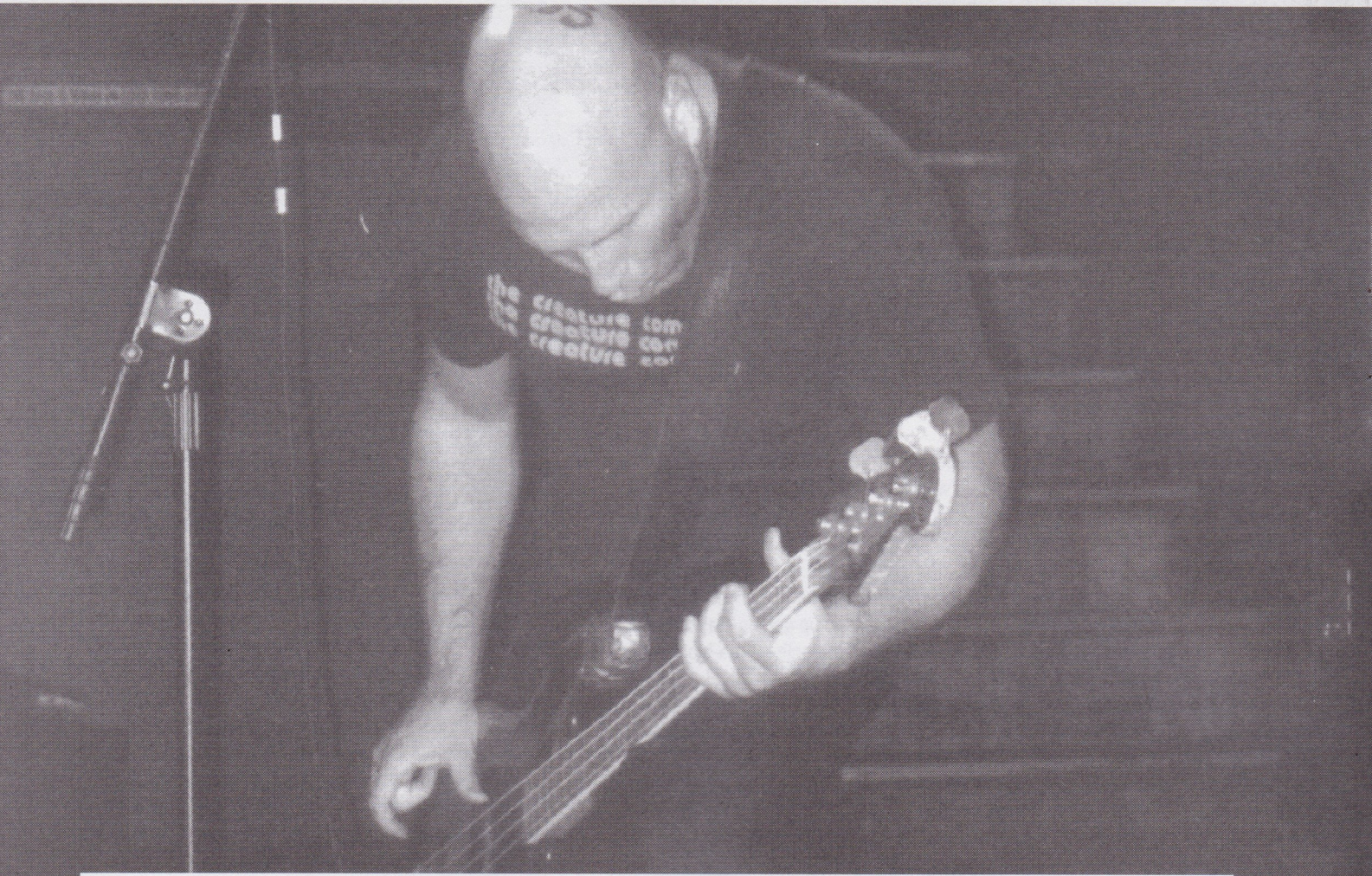
**Bill:** I mean of course we all have a million dollars (laughter)

**Nick:** And we all drive around in Lamborghini's now. (laughter)

**So has your first single "Tell Me What You Want" been getting a lot of airplay on bigger stations?**

**Bill:** It did ok. We're still working on getting some of the bigger markets which in radio is what really matters, but it's pretty cool that we can find out that some stations in Florida love us and play us all the time out of nowhere.





**Eric:** It seems the way it worked was that people who really liked the song played it and supported it and went crazy for it and are still playing it. But the stations that aren't playing it are the ones you have to pay off (laughter)

**Bill:** Really, it's insane. We've heard other stations who love the music but can't play it because...

**Nick:** It doesn't fit into their format. It's hilarious because we're so radio-friendly, but you turn around and listen to the radio and realize "we absolutely don't belong on these stations at all"

**Has Epic talked to you about making any music videos? Is the world going to see Ultimate Fakebook on TRL anytime soon?**

**Bill:** We had it in our contract that we had to do one, but we all mutually decided that we're not going to go make one if it's not going to get played. It has always been about waiting to see if something happened with radio. It would be fun to do one but we don't want to spend 175,000 dollars to have a party tape.

**Nick:** Whoa check out our video! Right before we got dropped!

**Eric:** We spent all this money and the video didn't go anywhere so they dropped us.

**Bill:** Look at this video though, it's hot!

**Is it harder for you guys to play when you can tell that the crowd isn't too into it?**

**Eric:** It's definitely harder but we're used to it because that's the way we started out.

**Bill:** It makes us not have as much fun. Because the way we approach a rock show is just all out, we're jumping up and down, giving the rock sign, going crazy like it's the last show we're ever gonna play. Poking eyeballs out, everything. So if people just stand there, after a while you're not having as much because we don't play for just ourselves, that's one thing that's really key about our band. If we're gonna go up on stage and go

crazy we're gonna give people a rock show and exchange things with people. That's why we come there, to have fun with rock n' roll.

**Eric:** But let's be honest, that entire Get Up Kids tour when nobody knew who we were that was a challenge because every night the crowd would not move they would just stand there. We were playing to these packed crowds every night and giving it our all so we did get used to it after a while. But when the record got wider distribution and people started hearing the songs and coming to the shows knowing the songs it definitely changed for us and those are the most fun. When you drive up and you've never played somewhere and there are all these kids in the front row singing along.

**Bill:** But even when we were the unknown band on that tour still we got positive responses. They're standing there but in between songs they were going crazy for us.

**Nick:** It doesn't look like anyone is getting into anything it looks like you're just bombing, you're done. And then after the show just shitloads of people are coming up and just saying, "I love your band blah, blah, blah." We drove two hours to come see you guys and you're just like, "Ok, I guess you just weren't ready to party."

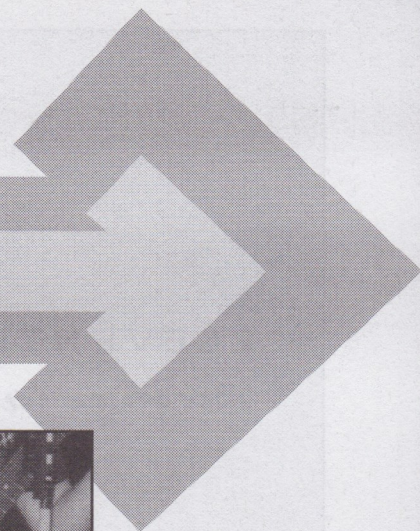
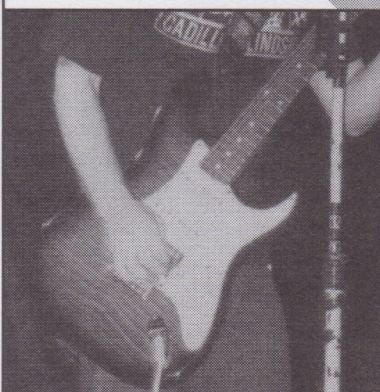
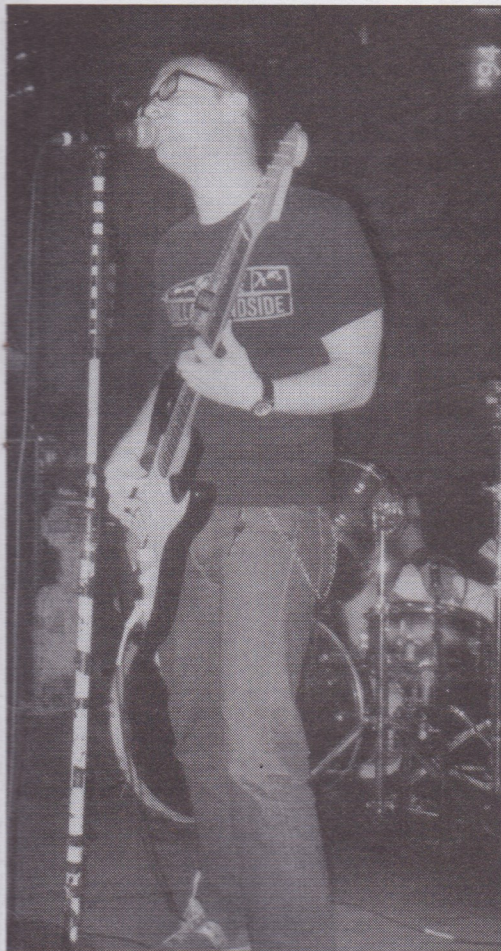
**Well the Get Up Kids crowd isn't exactly known for their energy**

**Eric:** That's what I'm trying to say. Now when people come to our shows they know what to expect.

**Bill:** There are certain cities where we're starting to do really well, and they're reacting just like they do when we play in our local area- which is everyone just going crazy. When we play in Manhattan, Lawrence, or KC, it's non-stop rounds of shots being given to us on stage- its one huge party. It's just out of control fun and it's starting to kind of get to that vibe in other cities now.

**How did you develop your sound since you have definite metal influences that are frequently referenced to on your albums? Why don't you**





**sound like Pantera?**

**Eric:** I wouldn't say our metal influenced that songwriting that much, it's just something that we all grew up on.

**Bill:** We reference it now in sort of a nostalgic kind of way, but we definitely have a flair that's from the metal days.

**Eric:** More so than any other band we've played with on the Hollywood circuit, which is funny because we get described as an emo band to people which is hilarious to us. We also get the Weezer thing a lot because they have a lot of the same things going on: you hear the metal stuff, you hear the light-hearted pop-rock and things like that. We see no reason to stay to one type, and that's why it's so weird when people pigeon-hole us. I guess that's what people do and are going to do, but to lump us into the same category as the Promise Ring is a bit ridiculous. (laughter)

**Do you ever get sick of the Weezer comparisons?**

**Bill:** We don't get sick of it but it would be nice to hear something different.

**Eric:** But we also get Elvis Costello.

**Bill:** It's funny because most of the bands we get compared to are bands with glasses. I think all the band's with glasses it's like a circle...Elvis Costello probably got Buddy Holly comparisons.

**Eric:** We haven't got compared to Bush yet but I don't think that bald guys are really that exciting (referring to Nick)

**Nick:** Bald guys are usually the drummers. Like in AC/DC.

**Eric:** You're gonna have to grow a goatee so we can get the Bush comparisons.

**Nick:** Yeah, Vertical Horizon or some shit like that! (laughter)

**So if Epic decides to drop you after this record what's the plan? Do you have any qualms about going back to an indie?**

**Eric:** We are kind of doing both because they basically told us that they want to do the next record so when we get home we're going to work on demos for it but in between that we're gonna do an independent EP on Heroes & Villains.

**Nick:** We're not one of those bands who are like we're on a major label and if we don't succeed here, we're done. No we do this because we love to do it and were gonna keep putting out albums and hopefully people will keep listening to it and coming to

shows. That's the only thing we're looking forward to. Everybody gets dropped! There's no way in hell that we're not gonna be gone from Epic. You don't stay in one place forever you keep moving and keep doing what you do.

**Eric:** It's weird because before you get signed to the big label you always think that that's when you've made it, but when you get signed to it you realize it's just another stepping stone to something else that you're going to do.

**Ok, I'm about done but I have to ask the cheesiest question ever. If you guys could pick one song to be in your own Ultimate Fakebook what would it be?**

**Bill:** I think it would be awesome to have the Ultimate Fakebook fakebook. I think it would be great to have all our lyrics, tabs, everything.

**Eric:** I think the song "Deuce" by Kiss should be in every Ultimate Fakebook because it's the best opening rock song ever.

**Nick:** Uh...you know I've never even thought about it so I can't even tell you. (laughter) That threw me for a loop. I think most people who play music but don't play jazz or read music probably have no idea what the Ultimate Fakebook is. Actually I think the Ultimate Fakebook is illegal in some states because it violates copyrights are whatever.

**Eric:** Tom Sawyer? Would that be in our Ultimate Fakebook?

**Nick:** No. That shouldn't be in any Ultimate Fakebook. If I could eliminate that one, that would be the one I would eliminate. I would put a block on pretty much any Rush.

**Bill:** We've actually talked about selling Ultimate Fakebooks at shows. We have a lot of people ask for the tabs it's just we'd have to find someone who can do that.

**Nick:** Transcribing it would suck.

**Your music isn't super complex stuff though**

**Bill:** No it isn't, but at the same time that's a huge task.

**Eric:** That will have to wait until we go Platinum.

**Photos by Jonah**



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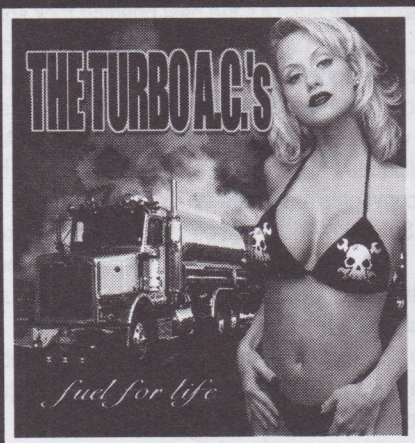
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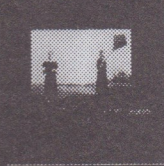
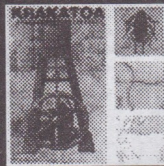
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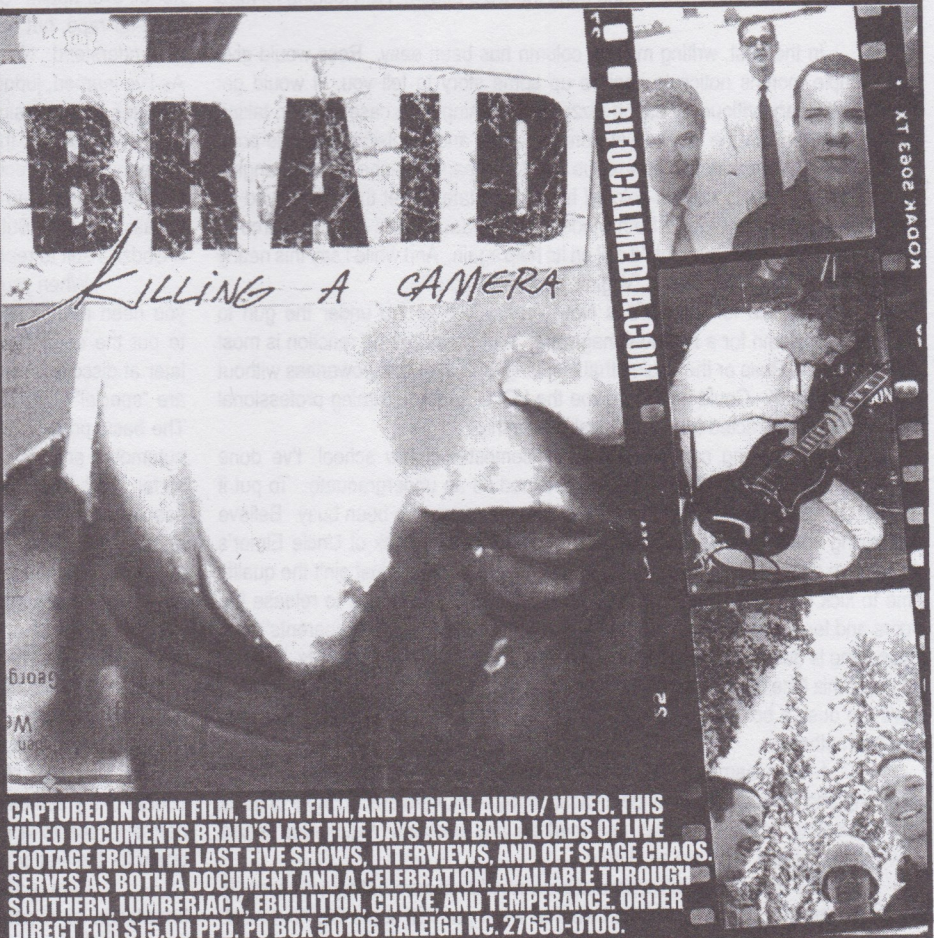
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# Adam Lindenberg

## ★ A Different Dose ★

It's 6:42 on Christmas morning, and I'm on a plane trying to remember where my brain went... or maybe just the time to use it. Writing this column usually takes place in the darkest room, me sitting with a little glass of whatever beverage I fancy at that moment. This year's office space is sunny Florida, and, while visiting the grandparents is typified by consolations from my sister like, "At least you'll catch up on movies" and "Good thing there's a beach," I am looking forward to it.

In the past, writing my LOI column has been easy. Ross would give three ample months notice to conjure up some story to tell you. I would get Ross' preliminary critique by eating pizza and finishing off a case of beer, taking blurry notes on what he laughed at from his sober and inquisitive vantage point on the sofa. There was this obnoxious oversized paper mache vagina hanging on the wall in the only salmon-colored house on State Street that Ross lived in. Our obscenely brilliant friend Seth made it for a class. It was such a source of inspiration, and I never thought I'd call on its help again. And while I say this nearly everyday in a different capacity, "Vagina, where are you?"

Deadline for Issue #9 is New Year's Day, so I'm under the gun to pump out a column for a biannual magazine. And your ensuing reaction is most appropriate. Is Ross or the vagina that inspiring, and am I that powerless without them by my side? Could be. Or maybe the LOI writers are turning professional and are easily distracted from their loyal readership?

Just having completed my first semester of law school, I've done more work than all the previous ones combined as an undergraduate. To put it bluntly, I am cramming to finish this LOI column because I've been busy. Believe me, giving you all the time and effort it takes to finish a cask of Uncle Elmer's millennium vintage moonshine would be my pleasure. There just ain't the quality time to kick back with y'all lately. On December 28th, I continue to release the rigors and tensions of school lying on a dusty mattress on my grandparents' floor. Everything is dusty. Like the Okies in the *Grapes of Wrath* kind of dusty. There's no liquor this time my friends, only decaf coffee and prune juice. Don't fret. We still have the dust, a box of Kleenex, a laptop, my expanding digital music collection and each other.

I have learned a lot about the law this semester, and even though reflecting and repeating it is not ideal vacation material, here are a couple of quick and interesting cases. Besides flea markets and precisely regimented meals down to the minute, they are all I know.

The basic definition of assault is an intentional act creating a reasonable apprehension in the victim. This girl went to a frat party at some Big 10 school, got drunk, passed out and was raped by three brothers of the house. Bringing

charges against her perpetrators for assault, she was denied judgment. The jury ruled that the victim could not comprehend, nor be fearful, because she was passed out unconscious. I can just see the family in the courtroom; their dignity and life savings resting in the hands of their lawyer. The legal system and the girl's half-wit advocate, the only remaining sources of consolation and recourse, fucking her all over again. Of course she has a strong civil case for battery and criminal case for rape, but poor girl. Every time I think of assault, this rape victim helps me understand. No consolation to her. Flashcards would have worked just fine. As I've learned, judges and lawyers make mistakes in the practice of law. Many miscues and oversights are reviewed by the appellate system and checks on judicial power, but this is a textbook tale of an imperfect system. As a lawyer, if I ever make a decision this bad, I vow to turn in my bar card with the verdict. Growing a calloused skin is part of dealing with gruesome material and losing the occasional case. But practicing law after such a fuck-up would be like throwing on a Godzilla suit to repel a self-inflicted nuclear onslaught.

When you bring a course of action to the court's attention in a pleading, you need not be specific in your statement of the facts. The point is simply to put the defendant on notice of the suit, and the details are to be filled in later at discovery. An exception to this customary vagueness is when damages are "special" and the defendant cannot comprehend what you are requesting. The basic premise of one of my favorite cases is where two people got into an automobile accident, and one of them suffered nerve damage as a result. Normal so far, yes? The tricky part enters when the plaintiff discovers the nerve damage has caused him to have a permanent erection. The advantages are obvious, but the drawbacks must be rough. How do you put a price tag on the social awkwardness of meeting your daughter's boyfriend with a stiffy? When the doctor does that "cough" thing? Swimming? Take a moment to insert your own joke.

To sum up my first brush with law school, I didn't have much time to get imaginative. And because I only have one expression of creativity for the entire semester to my credit, I'd like to share it with you. I learned something fascinating about the capacity of the human mind. We all have our breaking points, times when we need to let loose. This one night, however, I did just the opposite. After working for eleven straight hours on Civil Procedure, the most boring and difficult course of my semester, my brain was ready to snap. Instead of grabbing for my normally reliable vices of a 16 oz Red Dog and Mario Kart, I decided to write a poem for the first time in my life.

I am really impressed with it. Although I am seriously lacking poetic knowledge or experience, Spit Valve has repeatedly pleased me. I like the content, but the circumstances it was written under is what amazes me. What the



human mind is capable of, especially nearing meltdown, is remarkable. This poem literally flew onto the page in 45 minutes after piercing such square material into my circular brain until 2 a.m. This poem is my brain's discharge after an eleven-hour solo. The footnote system, another child of this semester's toils, will give you a limited-access pass to the innards of my skull.

#### Spit Valve

What is it you're trying to understand  
Your towel accidentally kicks up the sand<sup>1</sup>  
Green olives in a jar, black in a can  
Swirling the juice down the sink  
On insanity's brink, clicking the dead link  
Trying to find the man with the plan to remove the stink<sup>2</sup>  
Even though it hurts to think

The phone will save you soon enough  
Selling you some type of charm, a worm, an extra turn, an alarm  
A retreat at the farm will safeguard you from any harm  
Until someone with money realizes its beauty  
The struggle between prosperity and soul  
The free are crippled, truth be told  
Which joint's the tightest roll  
I'd like to impress you with my shoulder<sup>3</sup>  
It'll hold you without too much fare<sup>4</sup>  
Run cross-town with diligent care  
Don't despair, tear your losing tickets in the air  
Look for a hand where you wouldn't dare

There is no risk in gambling, if you're the casino boss  
As you're tossed, speaking for the generation lost  
Without hearing or fearing the mortal tearing  
Mothers gleaming for daughters excelling and sons no longer rebelling  
Climbing the webbing, laid down by those worthy of telling<sup>5</sup>  
What to eat, where to sleep, free parking if you drive a jeep<sup>6</sup>  
Cherokee, without identity, every amenity but a strong affinity for the minority

On our newly made buck, being jacked off the land sure does suck<sup>7</sup>  
With any luck, you'll find way into Al Gore's cabinet<sup>8</sup>  
He's better than me or you, parties can only number two  
Americans no longer can make your shoe  
So why care about the blue<sup>9</sup>  
They did it well for two hundred years, shed the first tears, endured the jeers of peers,  
companeros<sup>10</sup> wishing they could share a beer  
Thinking there might be one in the ole toolbox  
But there's just tools, fools, fooling and reeling, fumbling and looking,  
through their pockets for some type of feeling  
they run mighty deep, partly for fashion, but you might want to keep

a pad and pencil to keep track of your sleep, put your dreams in a heap for the end of the week  
before horns start blaring<sup>11</sup>

For people rearing, no one staring or even watching, stopping, the robbing  
of green found in its designated spaces

No one makes the buildings green, they just seem, to fit with the scheme<sup>12</sup>

But the sun still shines, train's on time

All the tumors remain benign and no stagnation in the line

Your prophecy will arrive with next month's statement

With it someone to fill the wine, open it fine, swirl it, whirl it do everything short of imbibe,

For the entire tribe, so no one may criticize your craze for the swine<sup>13</sup>, you're told to yield

at the international sign that means go

I posed a question at the start and the answer's there

Not in the lines read with seventy percent care<sup>14</sup>

Nothing between the words to stare, focus and unfocus in the right glare  
Won't produce a double-helix strand of hair, a pear, or the drunk son of

Tony Blair

But a self proclamation, an emancipation of the imagination, we treat like the locked room crawling with infestation

Should be explored, not ignored, even if only when you're bored,

To give you an outlet, at the outset<sup>15</sup>, so you'll never be lured

Into decisions made by your local neighborhood communist<sup>16</sup>

Sharing this stuff with LOI feels pretty good. Not because of any constructive criticisms I'm looking for from the readership, or to search the part of me that wants to return to the magical land of college, but I really needed a break. Out of the pit of monotony and regiment. Freed from the mucky trenches of professionalism and brevity. In a land where illustrative verbs are stunned and poignant adjectives are snubbed, law school's time demands and emphasis on efficient writing slurped up all my juices. LOI has been a homecoming to individualism and creativity: where my name is attached to writing instead of an anonymous number.

It is such a subtlety that I was missing. Like being woken up in the morning with a soft kiss on the cheek instead of your alarm clock, a soulful subway musician singing Amazing Grace on a long subway ride home or really good soup. You never really miss them, even when they're gone. It's not until you rediscover your appreciation that perfect hindsight begins.

I'm sitting on the return flight now. In brief retrospect over the hellacious week past with the grandfolk, the reason I am sane entering New Year's Eve is because LOI has been my vacation.

(Footnotes)

<sup>1</sup> One time I went to the beach with my grandma in Israel. I accidentally threw sand at a gay man who thought I had done so to "get his attention." He was yelling obscenities at me. I don't speak Hebrew and he wasn't getting any because I'm not gay. The other humorous result was my grandmother's reaction. She wanted to protect me, but hadn't done so since she nursed my bee sting at age seven. She just asked me, "Adam, do you want to ask that man to join us for some watermelon?" By the way, this was not the dusty grandma. This was the cool grandma, and even though it was slightly awkward to have the issues of homosexuality arise in her presence, she eased the tension nicely.

<sup>2</sup> The stink usually comes from me.

<sup>3</sup> There's a lot of drugs around law school. I've just been looking for a different kind of ride, something more substantial? I have big shoulders.

<sup>4</sup> New York is expensive.

<sup>5</sup> Has anybody noticed our generation hasn't had much of a cause to stand for lately? Everyone's enamored with success, dot coms and upward mobility—including the youth. Do teens even enjoy rock anymore? I remember the threat of nuclear war and the California grape protest. At least LOI's quest for good music is a step in the right direction. Even my mother, a sixth-grade teacher, is teaching her kids about the stock market. Why my mother feels 12-year olds need this type of education is subject for a whole other column.

<sup>6</sup> No joke. The New York Mets had a free parking for Jeep brand SUV owners in the Shea lot at a game this past year. Let the rich pat each other's back a little more.

<sup>7</sup> That new Sacajawea coin is going to be our new dollar, I heard. They're not printing one-dollar bills anymore. Nice the government honored the Native Americans after asking, "Can you move over a little bit more?" a few too many times.

<sup>8</sup> The whole Joe Lieberman-minority thing as a political strategy. Al Gore lost his home state of Tennessee; which means that state really loves Republicans or really hates Jews. I wrote Spit Valve before Gore lost, but nothing from this past Presidential race will become outdated for a while.

<sup>9</sup> See my columns in LOI #7 & #8. I can't get into my labor views in the margin.

<sup>10</sup> The only Spanish word I really understand. Means more than friends, but those who share a similar struggle. I often referred to my law school friends as such.

<sup>11</sup> Much of New York City is shallow, hectic and loud.

<sup>12</sup> Overcrowded and poorly planned. Visit Boston.

<sup>13</sup> And snotty, to no fault of either the wine or pork industries. I love you both.

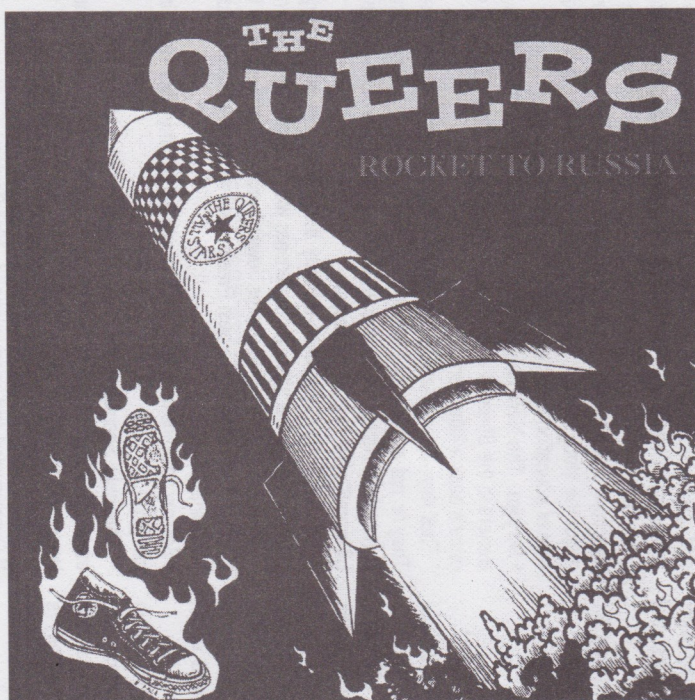
<sup>14</sup> I know it's a little long, thanks for sticking with it. You're almost there.

<sup>15</sup> It's raging in all our bellies. Express your feelings in a new way.

<sup>16</sup> See footnote #9.



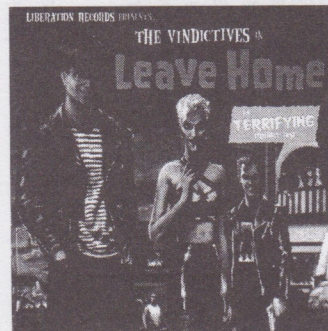
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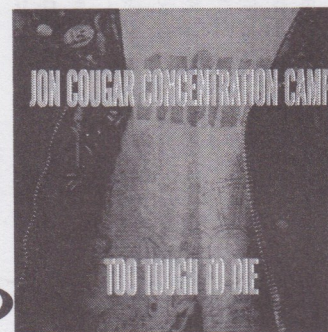
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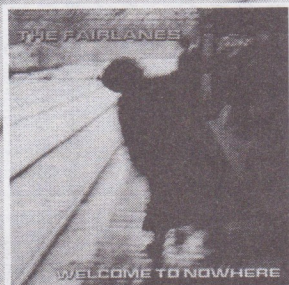
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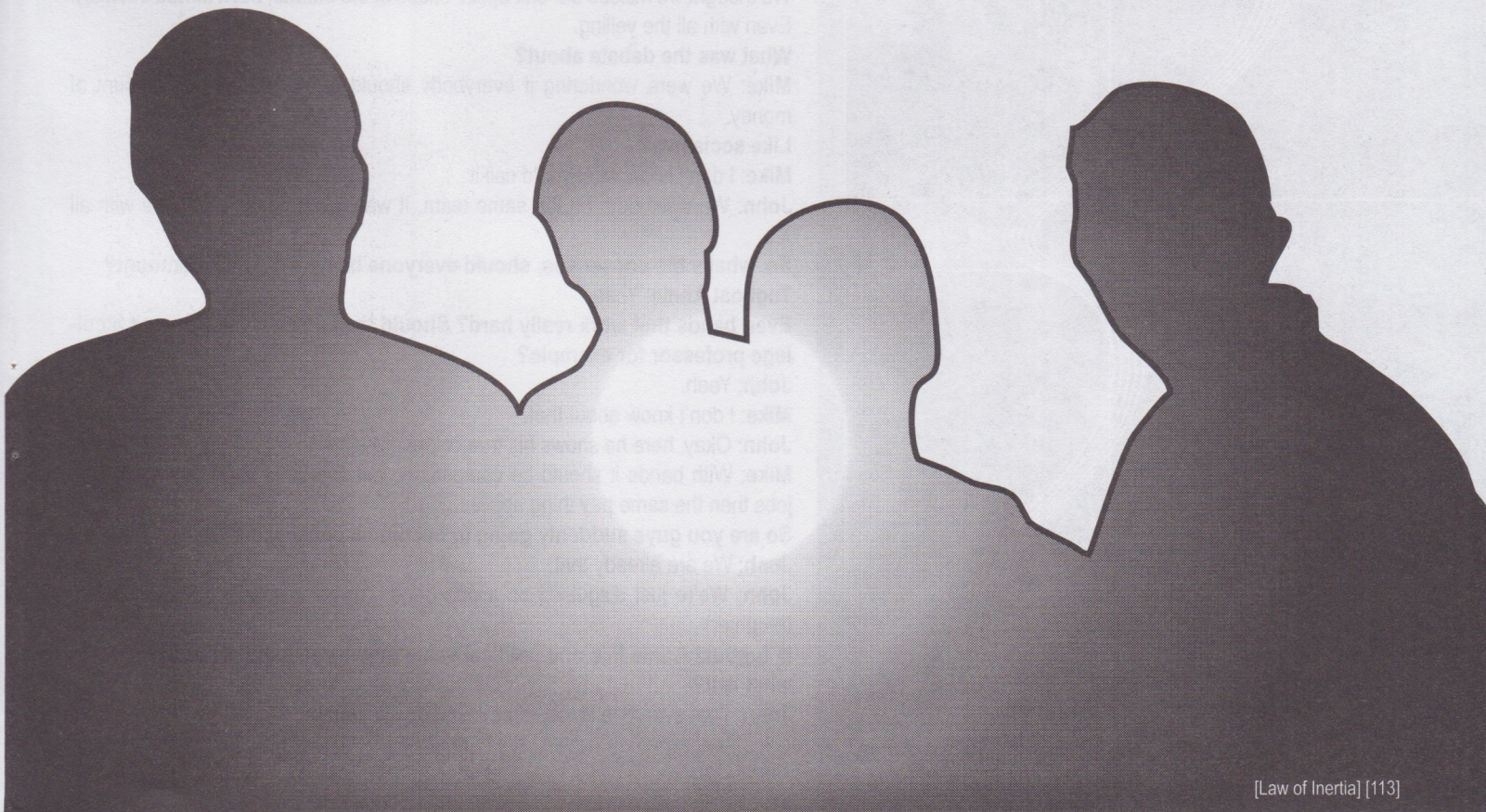




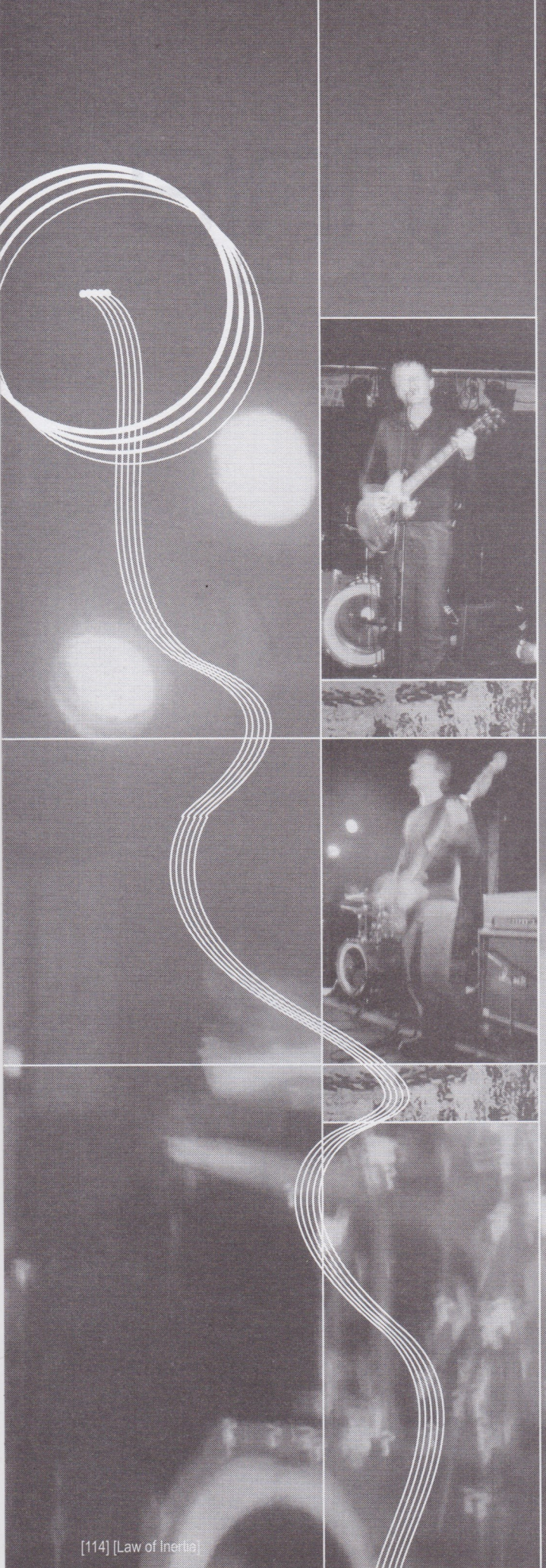
# Tugboat

# Annie

by Ross







*I think everyone has some weird story about how they came across a certain favorite band. In indie rock there are far too many diamonds in the rough for one person to catch without help. How many people go to the record store to pick up one CD and accidentally purchase another CD. That CD may turn out to be good, thus the buyer has made an unexpected discovery. The same type of thing happened to me with Tugboat Annie. Sort of. I stole one of those old Shredder compilations from my sister, hoping to take in the lazy sounds of Mary Lou Lord, who happened to have a track on the comp. Before I got to Ms. Lord's song, I was greeted by the minimalistic and melodic punk sounds of a band from Buffalo, NY. The song was called "Stay Inside" and the band was Tugboat Annie. It was such an amazing song and I listened to it probably every day for the next few years. However, no one I knew had heard of Tugboat Annie, so I had no idea how to get their records. The band then popped up on my radar again when they played at my dorm during my freshman year of college. By then they were starting to play regularly outside of the upstate NY area, and were about to move to Boston where they would alter their minimalistic power-pop songs into brilliantly crafted power-pop songs. I have since kept track of Tugboat Annie and watched their songs grow into some of the most beautiful and inspiring around. When the band played recently at the Mercury Lounge in NYC I decided it was high-time I sit them down and talk about their ideas of success, musical intent, and what made them tick. What I found out surprised me. Instead of being self-absorbed and shy as I would have guessed 4 guys who play such thoughtful music to be, they turned out to be fun, talkative, and goofy. Perhaps a little too goofy.*

**Okay, who do I have here and what do you play?**

**John:** I'm John and I play bass.

**Mike:** I'm Mike and I sing and play guitar.

**James:** I'm James, I play guitar.

**Josh:** I'm Josh, I play the drums.

**So, how was the drive down from Boston tonight?**

**John:** Me and Mike were having this serious debate so of course we miss our exit and we ended up in Jersey. We finally got off somewhere and turned around. We thought we missed our exit again 'cause of the debate, but it turned out okay. Even with all the yelling.

**What was the debate about?**

**Mike:** We were wondering if everybody should be paid the same amount of money.

**Like socialism?**

**Mike:** I don't know what you'd call it.

**John:** We were both on the same team. It was like a tic-tac-toe game with all X's.

**So, what's the consensus, should everyone be paid the same amount?**

**Tugboat Annie:** Yeah.

**Even bands that work really hard? Should they be paid the same as a college professor for example?**

**John:** Yeah.

**Mike:** I don't know about that.

**John:** Okay, here he shows his true colors. (laughter)

**Mike:** With bands it should be competitive, but everyone else who works real jobs then the same pay thing applies.

**So are you guys suddenly going to become a political band?**

**Josh:** We are already that.

**John:** We're just disguised as a pop band. I'm going to kick off your crown. (laughter)

**If Tugboat Annie has one political value they try to espouse in their music what is it?**

**John:** That everyone is the same, everyone is equal.



**Do you have any lyrics to prove that point?**

**Mike:** [Mike thinks about it.] I don't think we play political music. The shows aren't that political. That's actually something we talk about in the band when the radio isn't working. I think the music is political in the personal sense, but are we going to try to force our socialistic theories on the world through music? Probably not. I mean, we're just a bit less aggressive than Rage Against the Machine.

**Just a bit. (laughter) Okay, let me ask another question: if every band has a purpose, what is Tugboat Annie's purpose?**

**Josh:** Have a good time.

**John:** Yeah, have a good time. All of us together having a good time.

**Mike:** I don't think our socialism theories apply to rock and roll, they only apply to regular work. With our music and our performances we try to step outside those boundaries of the political versus plain fun. When our music is good, that is. Music in general gives listeners a chance to transcend the boundaries of meaning. In other words, music to me means more than just what the song is called or what the lyrics say. When you find music that really hits you in the heart, then it doesn't matter what the intended point of the song is. In my opinion, good music means different things to everyone—not just what it was intended to mean or to provoke.

**Do you guys succeed in transcending?**

**Mike:** Sometimes, but we can't do it by ourselves.

**John:** We need the crowd. I think that's true for any band, though. We need the whole room to be a part of the mood we try to create.

**What happens when the crowd isn't with you?**

**Josh:** That means we're sucking because we're simultaneously dealing with the pitfalls of reality at the same time as our music. You can't mix reality and music. There are too many things that drag you down in reality that detract from the special place you're trying to create.

**John:** Usually we keep playing hoping that eventually we're going to win them over. By that time either we've drank all the beer, played all our songs, John has taken his shirt off, and the crowd has left. What we should do in those cases is quit after the first song that prompts some sort of reaction from the crowd.

**Josh:** Yeah, we don't care if that reaction is bottle-throwing or head-bobbing. We should stop playing right after that.

**Mike:** Basically, sometimes it's good for us, sometimes it's good for them, and on a really good night it's good for both of us.

**John:** Like one night we played in rural Louisiana in a bar where people were eating cray-fish and jambalaya or something. Something happened that night and the people were just really into us. Probably none of them had ever heard us before, but it was amazing. We were playing right next to where the crowd was standing and everything just clicked. We've only played there once and we decided never to go back since it would only ruin the experience.

**Let's talk about the band's status in indie rock now. You moved from Buffalo, NY to Boston about 5 years ago, and your sound is getting very polished and much more focused than it was when you first started out. Yet, I don't think you guys reside on the level I think you should.**

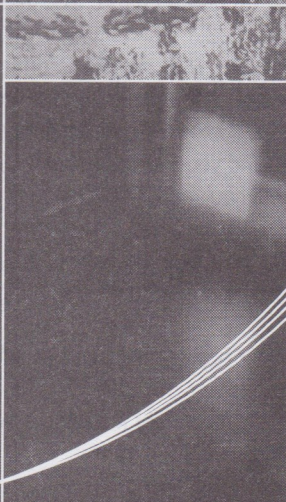
**Josh:** I think you're exactly right, I should be on a higher level. (laughter)

**John:** Um, maybe we should go upstairs. (more laughter)

**Mike:** Yeah, our new record is more polished sounding. That comes from learning how to play better and learning how to do what we want to do with our instruments in any given song we write. We're starting to get some recognition and we've been fortunate enough to work with good people who want to see our sound progress from a garagey punk band to a more professional-sounding pop band. As far as should we be selling out clubs all over the east coast on a regular basis? Well, that's hard to say, there's a lot of work you have to do.

**Do you guys do enough work?**

**John:** Nope.





**Mike:** We've never had a really good work ethic when it comes to the band. We want to have a really good band that makes really good music. If we can figure out a way for that to translate into our band moving to the next level then that's cool, but right now we're not as focused on that as we could be.

**John:** I think we put making cool music and having a good time ahead of living off the band, per se.

**Mike:** A lot of people make good songs. Then there's a whole line of other things you have to do with your band where it becomes sort of like a job. It's a lot of work.

**Do you think the band would be less fun if you knew that if "we don't make this great record and sell ten-thousand copies and tour for three months then we're not going to have enough money to eat next month?"**

**Mike:** That's sort of what I'm talking about. Those things are not decisions you make on the spot. You get presented with that or you look into the future and see that as an option, and that's the hard part.

**Josh:** Tugboat Annie has a history of always making the wrong decision. I run back through my mind and think about the band's history and I think I've counted like 60 decisions that we made that prevented us from becoming rock stars.

**So, tell me some decisions that if you hadn't made you would now be bigger than N'Sync.**

**Josh:** Well, if I had made every decision the opposite. Okay, they asked us if we wanted to have a Mariachi type rhythm section for a song on the new record. We turned them down. If we had had that Mariachi band we would have been huge, man! (laughter) We would have drawn the whole Ricky Martin crowd.

**John:** I'm still pushing for moving the band into a polka-type groove thing. Mariachi is so 5 years ago! I mean, isn't this whole thing about staying true to your roots? If so, then we should ditch the pop and move in a polka direction. (laughter)

**Question: Josh, why did you leave the Might Mighty Bosstones to play for the ska powerhouse that is Tugboat Annie?**

**Josh:** Who told you I did that?

**I have my sources.** [the Big Top Records webpage]

**Josh:** I left a long time ago actually. We sort of had musical differences. I didn't really like ska anymore and I was looking for a really good pop band to contaminate with my polka beats. No seriously, I was living in Boston after I left the Bosstones and I met these guys care of the Sheila Divine. Their songs were fucking awesome and I wanted to keep playing music and these guys were looking for a drummer so I jumped on.

**I imagine the shows you were playing with the Bosstones were many times bigger than shows like this one at the Mercury Lounge.**

**Josh:** Well, I was only on the first two albums so it was still pretty underground at that point. But, by the time "Where Did you Go" came out they were getting really big in Boston. But, right after that I quit and went to college so I didn't get any of the benefits of being a rockstar.

**John:** See, decision number 38 that we made was not to wear all plaid up on stage and sort-of milk the ex-member of the Bosstones thing for all it was worth. (laughter)

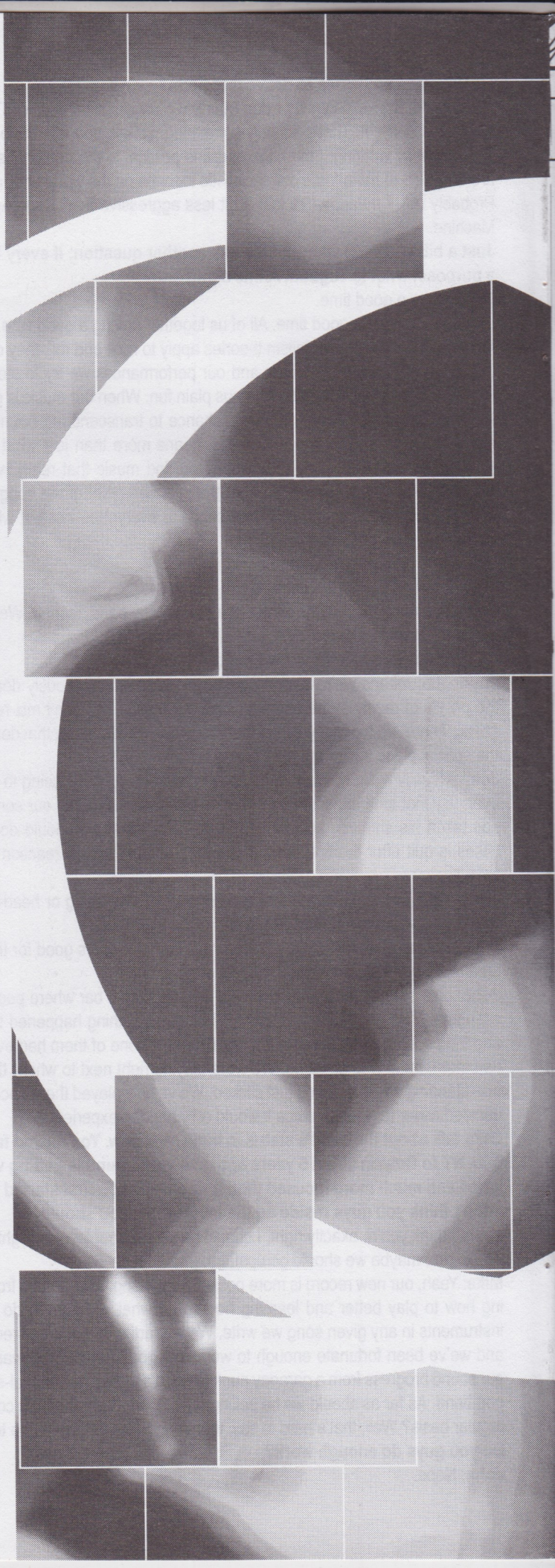
**Josh:** I was thinking of borrowing their horn section instead of the Mariachi band.

**John:** Okay, I'm going to make this decision right now and a year later we'll see if it was the wrong decision: no horns.

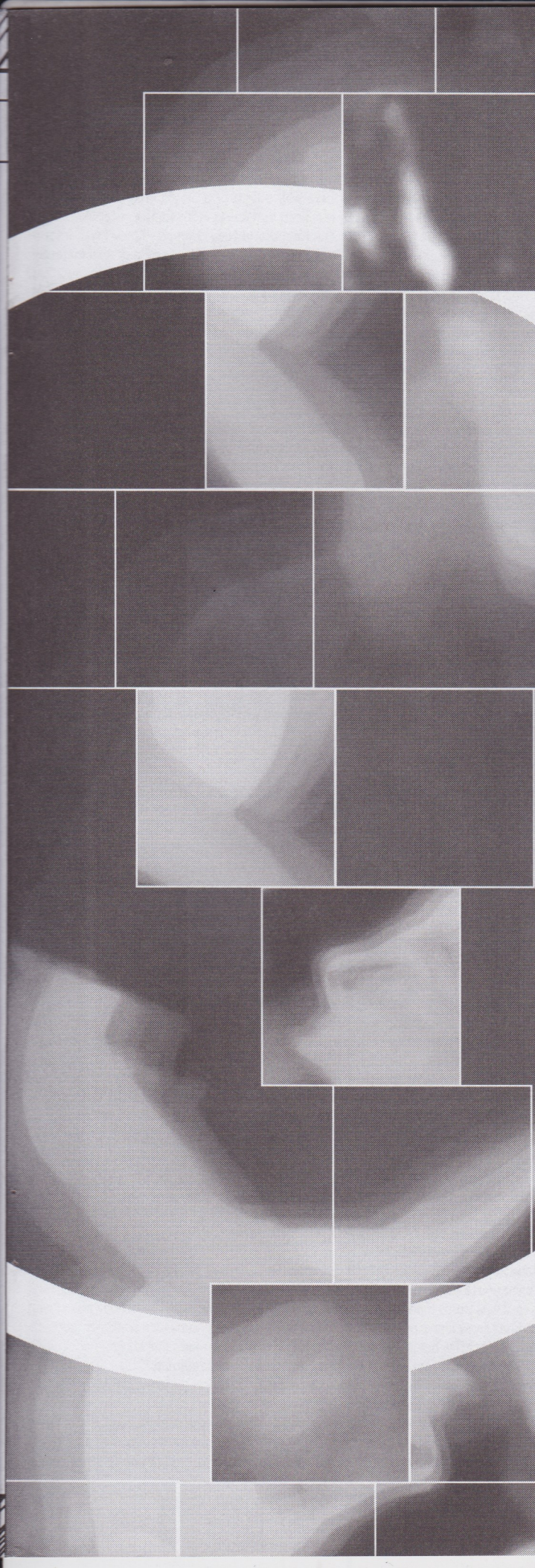
**Tugboat Annie:** Agreed, no horns.

**You guys are so organized you're making plans a year in advance.**

**John:** That's right. We're the hardest working band in show business. And, I guarantee you that the no horns decision will prove to be number 61 on the bad decisions list. You just watch, every band on MTV will have horns in







them, but meanwhile we made the decision to keep it bass, drums, and guitar. (laughter)

**Okay, Mike, this one is for you since you write all the music. Excuse my plagerized question but, do you need to be sad to write a sad song? Do you need to be in love to write a love song.**

**John:** What movie is that from?

**Almost Famous.**

**John:** Oh yeah, I think I'm the only one in the band that's seen it.

**Mike:** I'd say it's fifty-fifty on the sad song. But, no you don't have to be sad to write a sad song. You have to have been sad at one point, possibly recently, but I know that when I'm upset I just write shitty music.

**John:** Do you think songwriters who have never really been in love can write good love songs? They just copy the sentiment of other musicians who have been in love. I think sad songs don't really work that well in a live setting. And, we're a band that likes to play live. If we played only sad songs then the chicks would probably dig us a bit more but you wouldn't have the same kind of booty-shaking that regularly takes place at a Tugboat Annie show. I listen to the classic rock station all day and when they have those epic, dreamy songs I go nuts.

**Like when "Free Bird" comes on you go nuts?**

**John:** Dude, I do. When they play "Spirit in the Sky" I'm a fucking mess. (laughter) We try to emulate the real tear jerker song-writers, like from the '70s. I think we're a pretty upbeat band so when we write sadder songs we have to draw from other people's experiences.

**Well, I really think that Tugboat Annie has a pretty melancholy sound, even for a pop band.**

**Mike:** That's my fault. I tend to be more of an optimist. Sometimes I see things that really strike me as being important and I tend to use those in creating a feeling when I write. Contrary to John's belief, I don't put on Journey or Styx for inspiration. If I see something that strikes me I write it down.

**I must say, this is a much goofier interview than I expected.**

**John:** What did you expect?

**I thought you guys would be wearing all black and have shaggy hair and be really aloof. You guys seem less pensive than your songs would make me think.**

**John:** We can talk for a long time about all the songs, and a lot of them may be sad songs, they're all kind wrapped into another package. Like, it's okay to be sad and one day you won't be sad anymore. They're not songs of despair 'cause we're not totally depressed people. I mean, when you see us play later tonight you tell us if you think we don't look like we're having fun, that we're really into the music, and if we look like we're bummed out when up on stage. We're not even though the songs may have a sadder note to them when Mike writes them.

**Mike:** That's fair. I don't know if sad is the right word.

**John:** One time after a bad show on tour, we're all looking at each other and talking about if what we're doing is the right thing and if we're approaching song-writing the right way. And Josh turns around and goes, "but dude, this is our group therapy." When we're up there on stage, we may not be playing the loudest or the angriest music, but we're dealing with our emotions and our problems in our way. It's really cathartic. Most people associate catharsis with screaming. We don't. We associate catharsis with anything that makes you feel better. If we're not the most tear-jerking or scream-inducing band in the world then that's fine. You've got 4 guys who all come from the same places and you stick them in a room to create and really interesting shit comes out. And that's when the shows are the most fun.

**Well yeah, you're the classic rock guy, Josh is the ska kid, Mike's the sad dude, and what are you James?**

**Josh:** He's the post-rocker.

**John:** Tugboat Annie is group therapy for a schizophrenic band.



# Melissa



When I saw a group of kids huddled around someone slumped against the wall outside of the At the Drive-in show in Pomona, I began to grow curious about what all the fuss was about. I wasn't sure if there was a fight or a maybe just a major-league LA scenester. Finally, as I got closer, I realized that it was Melissa, the outspoken, self-proclaimed "brown girl" from MTV's *The Real World New Orleans*. Since I was interning in the music department for the *Real World*, I introduced myself and was instantly greeted with "Can you put *Jets to Brazil* or the *Anniversary* in the next show?" At first I was taken aback to learn that a fellow punk rocker was appearing weekly on the highest rated show on MTV, and I thought that it might surprise our readers as well. So allow me to present Melissa Howard. And yes, in case you were wondering, she's exactly the same as in person as she was on the show. Loud, outspoken, and not afraid to say what's on her mind.

#### So what have you been up to lately?

I started a business at [princessmelissa.com](http://princessmelissa.com). I sell prints of my artwork and I think I charge very fair rate- fifteen dollars for each print. I sit here and have to do all the work. I put everything in little bags, mark up the envelopes, go to the bank, call up and make sure they have money, go to the post office...I have to do everything. I touch every single piece of artwork and I don't know if kids know that. So this is a piece of TV history for 15 bucks? That's pretty hot. To know I sat in my kitchen all day never seeing the sun so I could fill your order. I think that's nice (laughter)

#### How is business so far?

I've gotten myself into debt just getting the prints made and it hasn't paid me back yet, but hopefully it will. I have five prints available. They're probably the ones you saw on the show. I know the hype of the show is dying down, but I hope that the art never goes away because this art is me without *Real World*.

#### Do you think that your notoriety will fade as the hype dies down?

Oh yeah, people are going to be over me tomorrow. It's already died down so much.

#### Speaking of the show, I was curious, When you were on the show, did you have activities you had to participate in, or could you just sit around the house all day and watch TV?

There was no TV.

#### There wasn't?

No TV. No music. The thing was that if we were listening to music too loudly not only would it interfere with the wireless microphones that we had to wear all the time. The other problem was that if it got on the show, they would have to pay for it, and MTV is notorious for not wanting to pay. It was hard for me because when you have your headphones on you don't want anyone to bother you. Plus the music I listen to, I want to listen to it loud. I don't want to sit there with headphones and be all quiet. Everybody would always look at me funny because I'm rockin' out in this little corner. That was probably the worst part of being in that show. I don't mean to sound cheesy, but when you've grown up listening to music, and wanting music all the time, and getting stoked about new stuff, it sucks to have it taken away. Can you imagine if you had your favorite CD stricken from your life forever? That was it basically. But it was cool because Jamie the frat guy- I love him to death- works out to the *Promise Ring* now.

#### Don't you think the *Promise Ring* is a bit too wussy to work out to?

I don't know. Well it works out well, because he listens to it when he's on the treadmill. He would be on there like singing "make me a mix tape!" It was hilarious. I also noticed that a lot of my CD's are missing. A *Velocity Girl* CD is missing as well as a *Hankshaw* CD and they didn't show up on the MTV auction so somebody else in the house has them.

#### What kind of response did you get from putting the *Promise Ring* and *The Get Up Kids* on the *Real World* CD?

I'm embarrassed to even be on that CD. If they've got *Toad the wet Sprocket* and *Big Head Todd* or...

#### Peter Tosh?

Yeah, why would anybody even buy an album with the word "Tosh" on it? That's just embarrassing. So I put the *Get Up Kids* and the *Promise Ring* on there and kids when they see me at shows, it doesn't go over well...

#### Why doesn't it go over well?

Because at shows kids question me the whole time. They're excited that I'm there, they're like "dang you're the *Real World* girl, what are you doing here?" Like when I went to *At the Drive-In*, it was worse than being at the *Beverly Center* on a Saturday- everybody was staring at me. And I know I have no and get my finger quotes in there, "punk rock credibility" because I'm attached to MTV, but that doesn't mean I have to listen to music that sucks.

#### So do you think the *real world* has hurt your "punk rock credibility"?

(laughter) Are we using the word "punk rock credibility" like it's a real thing?

#### Yeah, we're using it in quotes. Does it even exist to you?

When I got into this music I was 14 or 15, and I was little miss straight-edge. I was never cool. I was never credible with the hardcore of sxe kids. So for me it's a part of my life that people don't really know about unless they see me at a show. I'm not one of these people



# Howard

who are like; "Do you have the new Deep Elm Emo Diaries number 1842 on pressed green vinyl?" I've never been like that. I don't care. If it's good music it's good music, I'll have it on a tape and play it in my car. I'm not one of these name droppers, but I've met so many name droppers at shows. Kids who are like "You're the Real World girl and you like this?" I used to share that enthusiasm. I guess I'm jaded from being in the scene too long and seeing the kind of shit that makes kids want to move onto bigger and better stuff. I'm not quite sure if I've made the leap yet, but we'll see. For now I still have a pretty good collection to get by on and remember my glory days—although I'm always bummed when I can't afford new records I want.

**Before I had met you I had no idea you were in the indie or punk rock scene. I think I noticed a Kid Dynamite shirt on the show once, but why didn't we see you at shows in New Orleans?**

A lot of shows a few venues in New Orleans refused to let me in because they didn't want the cameras there.

**Did you have to clear it with the venue or the band or both?**

The venue and the band. Sometimes the band would get all into themselves, like "we want to get paid." I just didn't tell the directors where I was going half the time, because they would always mess up the vibe. For example, there is this band Blackula in New Orleans, who is just scary and heavy and weird. And everybody that's there is scary and heavy and weird. Then I walk in, I've got this big gigantic fluorescent lamp above my head and a gigantic camera attached to me and a sound guy standing over me with a microphone— and it kind of messed the vibe up, ya know? So when the Dismemberment Plan rolled around I was like "I'm going jogging," and sure enough the cameras were waiting outside of the venue. It was so embarrassing because the kids there are so unforgiving; they're like you "MTV scum."

**Were kids really that adamant about hating MTV?**

Yeah. You know the ones that are too emo for their own good.

**But the Get-Up kids and Saves the Day both made videos.**

I've never seen a Get Up Kids video in my life. Was it on M2?

**No, I think I saw it on 120 Minutes.**

Really? (surprised) 120 minutes still comes on? See I don't even watch MTV anymore, because if I even see a commercial with my face on it or see an episode I just want to like slit my wrists.

**Do you have crazy stories that we didn't get to see on TV?**

Hankshaw came, but the director kicked them out the first night because they were rambunctious as hell.

**Can the directors just kick your friends out of the house?**

No but they did. They're like "your friends are totally insane." I tried to explain that to them that Tampa is all about mayhem, but they didn't get it. First of all, Harold comes in the house offering the Mormon girl brownies "special ones." (laughter) Then the singer, Milton comes in completely naked with just a fur shawl on and black combat boots and thick black oasis type wig and starts washing the dishes. The whole time, my roommates are like "what the hell is going on?" They pulled so much stuff down in the French quarter where children tap dance for money. They were harassing and making them say dirty things to them or else they wouldn't give them money. It's like these little kids are tap-dancing saying "your momma's a ho, you're momma's a freak!"

**That's so wrong!**

I know! But dude that's so Tampa and that's so Hankshaw. They had a good time.

**So you had to map out your whole day for the director?**

Yep. Basically, if I want to go to the pharmacy, I say "I'm going to the pharmacy" "Are you bringing a roommate?" "No." "Ok go ahead, but bring your pager." If they said bring your pager, that meant you're free without cameras for that little trip. But if he said "wait ten minutes," they were going to have a crew at the pharmacy waiting to film me going in. And they were going to have a crew at the front door waiting for me to go out. It's a real invasion of privacy.

**So did you ever just ditch out on them and sneak out?**

No. Well, Julie [the Mormon] and I faked an Emergency Room thing once. I said something was in my eye, so we walked into this hospital a couple of blocks away. The Real World marathon was on, so we started watching it, and the director's didn't know because they think there's something in my eye, and there's no filming in the hospital. So basically we watched 5 hours of the Hawaii marathon in a hospital waiting room. And it's so weird because now when I watch the show I'm so keen on camera angles and I'm like "Oh I can see her vampire clip on her microphone," and "Oh my god, I can see the boom mic." And the way that people answer the questions in interviews, I can totally tell what the question was. It's weird watching the show now.

**Did you watch the show a lot before you were on it though?**

Hell yeah. I'm like a Real World junkie.

**Do you sometimes get freaked out like you think cameras are still following you?**

Well when I go out in public I'm still pretty much watched all the time— stared at— so it kind of feels like I'm being filmed. But it doesn't freak me out anymore. It's weird at first getting used

to regular everyday life. Not having to call the director and say "hey I'm going to the store." When I got my own life back it was awesome because I was so over it, but at the same time it was strange.

**So are you over it?**

Well I'm developing my stand up comedy career so maybe perpetuating my fame will make this even crazier, but I don't want people to know me from TV and think that they know me the actual me. I'd rather they know me as some kind of performer some kind of actress, anything... just not the Real World girl. Because things I said when I was 22 on that show were not everything that I feel in my life, it's just immortalized. I don't want to answer to "why did you talk to David like that?" I was 22 and I was angry. It was one day, it was a Tuesday, it was raining, I was on the rag— I don't know. It was a bad day, and that doesn't shape who I am at all of the time.

**What's it like getting up in front of a crowd and doing your stand up comedy?**

I'm so scared to go up there. You'd think since four million people know about my business and my life I wouldn't be nervous, but comedy is an art. It's a performance, and when people just stare at you and you get no laughs, you should put yourself on suicide watch. That hurts and it's awful. I'm so scared I'm going to bomb. But they'll probably give me sympathy laughs because I'm famous...

**Hopefully...**

Not hopefully! Hopefully they'll laugh for real! (laughter)

**Right. So from what I've gathered you're sort of into more...cheesy emo stuff?**

AAAAAH! (laughter)

**I can't think of a different adjective. You like boys whining about girls, don't you?**

Oh, I love songs about boys who can't get girls or boys who just fucked up in general; they want their girlfriend back. It's probably because I don't do well with the opposite sex. I'm not one of those people who sit around with a journal in a satchel, "oh someone please help me, I'm so sad." I like what I like and I make no apologies for it. But at the same time, I can listen to the Get Up Kids and Jawbreaker everyday and be totally happy, and then I can turn on Cross My Heart. I have range. But I'm not into that experimental shit. People are like "you don't know about," and they name this really obscure band? I can't deal with it. Does it have a chorus? Do they sing about girls? Then I'm not with it.

**So where do you find out about new music nowadays? LOI Record review section?**

Oh yeah, always. Actually I did read a review in the last issue and I was going to buy it. Your Reggie and the Full Effect review that said "do you like the get up kids? Do you like them if they're retarded? And I'm like "yeah!" (laughter) I totally called up Vagrant and I was like I need the new Reggie at my house tomorrow. Right now I'm freaking out about the Miracle of '86. I have a copy in the house and a copy in the car. That's how much I love them. I like Ex Number 5 and the Jazz June's "The Medicine"

**So what's good music to put on if you want to make out with someone?**

You can make out to Death Cab for Cutie because it's mellow and you can take your attention off it enough to pay attention to the girl. You can't listen to something that you're going to start singing along to. You can make out to Cross My Heart, you can make out to Miracle of '86, all these things I've done recently, so I know. You can't make out to Trans Am because you want to do weird jerking dances. Ooh.. Christie Front Drive, you might get her pregnant with that shit.

**I'll be careful. So what are your goals for the future? You want to do stand up full time?**

I want to do stand up full time forever I want to do it so my material can morph into some sitcom. What if I had a late night talk show? If I interviewed guys and talk about my interaction with men, and at the end of the show there was music. Maybe then I wouldn't have such a hard time finding a boyfriend. Jonah, why don't we like anything the same? I don't think we'd do well dating. Are you depressed at all? I love depressed boys.

**Is there anything else you look for in guys?**

What impresses me is if a guy knows what I'm talking about. Every girl on the face of the planet who goes to shows listens to the Promise ring but if you're a guy and you can admit you like the Promise Ring and use your cock on girls, you're the bomb. (laughter)

**For the record, do you like it when strangers come up to you or do you hate it by now?**

I don't hate it. Sometimes it gets cumbersome when I can't make it from one store in the mall to another without someone being like "oh my gosh Real World!" Which first of all, is not my name. But I'm nice to every kid that comes up to me because I am a regular person. Some days it's harder for me than others, but when I know I'm having a bad day, I don't leave the house. People don't deserve for me to be a dick to them just because I'm having a bad day. I put myself in this situation. I put myself on national television for 4 million people to see me and part of the responsibility is talking to people about my experience. But it changes your whole life. I can't sit near a doorway, I can't sit in a restaurant that has a front full view window, and I need tinted windows in my car. I've signed nipples...it's very strange.







photo: mike dubin

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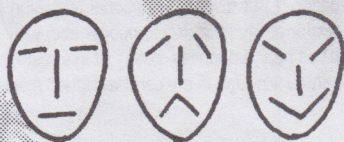
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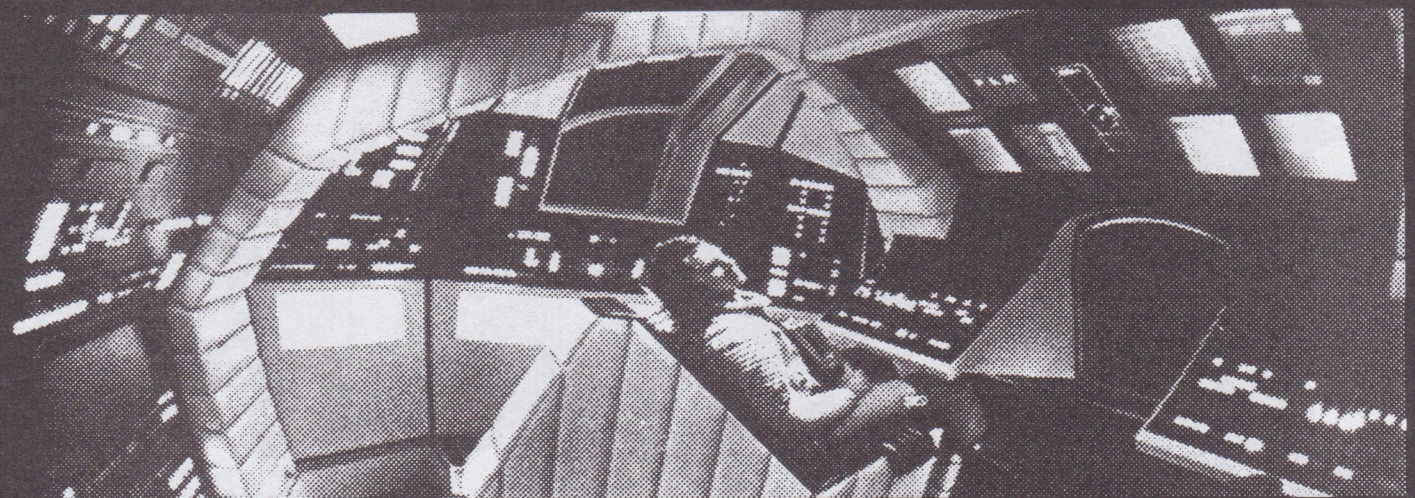


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# Photo Gallery

**The Hope  
Conspiracy**



Ross Siegel

**Samiam**



Jonah Bayer

Jerry Guzman



**Los Crudos**

Ana Saldamando

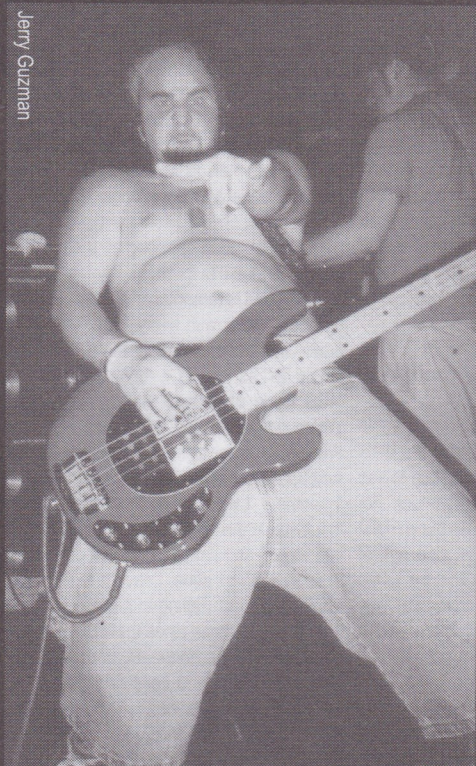


**Le Tigre**



## A Newfound Glory

Jerry Guzman



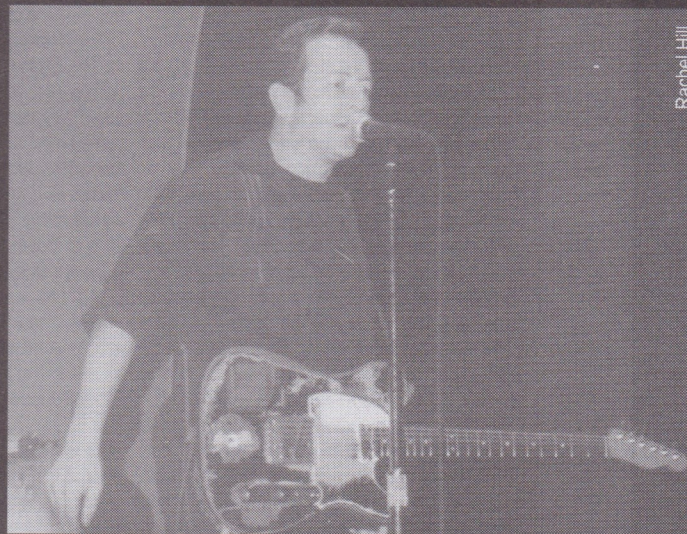
## Silent Majority

Ross Siegel



## Joe Strummer

Rachel Hill

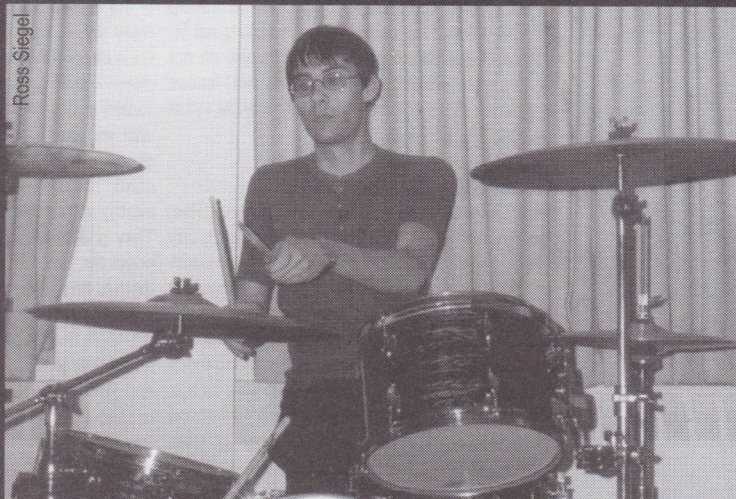


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## The (International) Noise Conspiracy

Ross Siegel



## Rainer Maria



# Information Overload: Zine Reviews

## Bigger Isn't Better (\$3 half size, color-cover / xerox)

I don't know where I got this zine. I don't know what the address is so that you might get a copy for yourself (even with the incredibly bloated cover price). I don't even know what issue this is. I do know that this is an intriguing read from a few indie rock girls who are east coast transplants to the Bay Area. Like many a zine, the best parts are not the interviews (the worst Bouncing Souls interview ever?). Instead the joy of this modest little publication lies in its exploration of what makes the Bay Area-- your home and mine-- "the best place in the world." And, they do a pretty good job of it as well. This zine is ridden with the notion that even though some of us may reside smack-dab in the middle of urban gentrification, that doesn't mean we have to like it and that also doesn't mean that some results of gentrification aren't acceptable. Yes my friends, sometimes bigger is not better (are you listening Courtney Love?) **RS**

## Counter Theory #3 (\$3 newsprint)

After their first issue I was unimpressed. After their second issue I was taking cover. Not only was it the biggest quality and size jump I had ever seen from a first issue to a second issue, but it looked like all the stylistic and content blunders most zinesters make early on had been remedied and rectified-- this was going to be the start of something big. I told a bunch of friends in the biz about this zine and hailed its praises as if Jann Wenner himself had entered the underground publishing world of the year 2000! Lo and behold we have a third issue and I think I spoke a bit too soon. It's not that this magazine doesn't have the makings of something big in the future, 'cause they very well may knock the socks off readers in future issues, but this issue, like their first, is nothing special. At least, not after the huge jump they made after their first issue. And, maybe I'm speaking too soon. After all, this is only their third edition. But, if *Counter Theory* wants to play ball with the big boys they have to take a few hard-won lessons to heart (lessons it usually takes zines 5 issues to learn): a) No one wants to read interviews with Elliott or the Promise Ring anymore if they're just going to say the same thing other interviews have been saying for the past 3 or 4 years; b) Never decrease your page count from your 2nd to your 3rd issues; c) DO NOT admit to your readers that the interviews herein are not "to the greatest caliber"; d) DO NOT do all -- or most-- of your interviews over e-mail (yeah guys, it's that obvious); e) Do not do all of your reviews without a single paragraph break. Talk about confusion; e-2) Write longer, more descriptive reviews; and, f) Please have a higher content to advertisement ratio. As I said, this zine is destined for great things. I recommend that their next step be making sure they are doing this zine to promote great literature in addition to great music. Please do not try to simply promote the music you like, 'cause sometimes that's not enough. (8608 NW 59 Court Tamarac, FL 33321) **RS**

## Defacto (offset/color cover- half-size)

If you've ever been to a show in Los Angeles, chances are you've seen a small but loyal group of kids selling these zines outside of the venue. It's almost useless to ignore them, because that just means that they'll be more persistent at the next show. Besides, you might as well give in the first time anyway, because this zine is worth much more than the dollar it will cost you. This zine is put together by ex-contributors to *Punk Planet* and *Buddyhead*, and while the word "artsy" is often thrown around in the zine world, I feel confident in proclaiming that this zine is artsy without being pretentious. It basically consists of interviews with

friends on random topics ranging from getting a blowjob in sex club in Barcelona, to working in a hospital with retarded people. However, the highlights of the zine are the raw and honest ravings from the pissed-off kids who write them. While this may not sound terribly interesting, the combination of these writings with the cut n' paste layout has a certain charm that glossy mags just can't achieve. This zine definitely isn't for everyone, but it's nice to see a group of kids focused enough to channel their aggression into something productive instead of sitting around and whining. Buy this, or get kicked in the face. (PMB 1-466 8205 Santa Monica Blvd, West Hollywood, CA 90046-5912) **JB**

## Devil In The Woods #2.3 (\$3 offset/full color glossy cover)

When I first glanced at the giant glossy photo of Stephin Merritt on the cover of this zine, I couldn't help but think how professional looking it was, and I was anxious to see what was inside. However, the photos in here look like they were just copied from a copy machine on the darkest setting, sort of ruining any real chance this zine has of looking professional. Honestly, the layout is fine, but some of these pictures just look horrible. If the cover was any indication of what was inside, I was expecting a full-color zine, and this is far from full color, or even anything aesthetically pleasing in the least. However, the content and plethora of bands interviewed begin to make up for its looks. Highlights of this issue included very short pieces on The Explosion, The Weakerthans, Ultimate Fakebook, Joan of Arc, The Sea and Cake, Jets to Brazil, Versus and other hot indie acts. The contributors for this zine are also much better than your standard zine writers, and I found the writing talent to be on par with many of the bigger mainstream music publications. It also seems that some issues come with seven inches, which have featured the likes of Death Cab For Cutie, The Red House Painters, Sunday's Best, and Granddaddy, which is pretty impressive. If this zine would go color or get some better printing quality it could be a serious rival to *CMJ*. *Devil in the Woods* is on top of the indie scene and could be ready to take it over with the right look. (DIW Magazine, PO Box 579168, Modesto, CA 95397) **JB**

## Held Like Sound #6 (free newsprint)

After all the pomp and circumstance of Y2K was all but forgotten, and the music journalism world had compiled list upon list of the best songs, composers, and records of the millenium a thought dawned upon me: I could really give a shit what the best song of the millenium was-- since everyone knows it was either "A Day in the Life" by the Beatles or the opening theme to "Rite of Spring" by Stravinsky. I really do not care to partake in the best of the best lists, since every list is completely relative and often times completely based on coolness points. It's as if that record you stuffed in the back of your closet never to listen to again until you clean your room two years from now isn't any good by *Rolling Stone's* or *Spin's* standards. By your standards, however, it may have been a masterpiece. This is exactly what I like about this issue of DC's finest fanzine. They pull all those old records out of the closet and talk about the ones from the past decade that really inspired them to be interested in music. This issue may have been a bit late in coming, or at least a bit late in coming to my attention, but the shorts on the best DC records of the '90s and the writers' favorite bands of the '90s is a worthwhile and interesting read, if at least to learn about what you missed out on from the past ten years. Good stuff from this always pleasing publication. Now I just wish the print quality was a bit better. (PO Box 42008 Washington DC 20015) **RS**

## Hanging Like a Hex #14 (\$2 color-glossy cover / newsprint)

Let's hear a rousing round of applause for Ryan and Co. for passing the 5 year mark of this zine's existence. Anyone who has ever done a zine (probably most of you) knows how much love, patience, work, and understanding goes into making the publication a reality. Anyone who has ever done a zine for longer than 3 issues (probably very very few of you) understands that getting burnt out or bored of your zine happens on a daily basis-- especially after your zine hits its stride. That is why Ryan and Hex's 5 year output is remarkable. Considering that this publication gets better with every issue-- and still has room to grow-- it is understandable that they wouldn't lose interest as fast as, say, *LOI*. Anyways, here we have another great issue of upstate NY's only good hardcore zine. We've got interesting interviews with Spark Lights the Friction (a great band on the Hex label), the National Acrobat (another band on the Hex label), Tristeza, and a few others. I would have to say that the best part about this issue is the Madball interview. Even though I am not into them-- and I'm even surprised to see them in a zine of such sophistication. Leave it to *Hanging like a Hex* to turn an accident-waiting-to-happen interview into a jewel. This is one of those zines that not too many people know about outside the northeast, but constantly ups the ante with every issue and consistently turns out some great writing. Do me a favor: pick this up. You'll love it. (c/o Ryan Canavan 201 Maple Ln. N. Syracuse, NY 13212) **RS**

**Jaded in Chicago #10** (offset/glossy cover) Apparently issue ten happens to be the "All Chicago issue," which isn't too far of a stretch, since the other issues I've seen seem to center around Chicago anyway. Interviews with Screaching Weasel, The Alkaline Trio, The Blue Meanies, Sig Transit Gloria, Story So Far, and The Arrivals. While I wasn't really interested in reading about any of these bands except the Alkaline Trio, it didn't help that these interviews were really poorly written. For some reason the interviewer seems to ask every band more about what label they're on and where their records were recorded, than what the band is all about. While these types of questions aren't inherently bad, chances are the band isn't going to say "We hate our label and here is a great story..." Instead these interviews come off as rather dull conversations that I'm glad I didn't have to suffer through. Aside from that, there are some writings about the city of Chicago, a photo gallery, and the typical zine fanfare. If you live in Chicago I would pick this up for free but I wouldn't go out of my way to seek this one out. Don't I sound like the jaded one? (c/o Bill Denker, 4031 Forest Ave, Western Springs, IL. 60558) **JB**

**Metal Rules! Magazine #7** (\$4.95 newsprint/glossy color cover) First off I would like to say that this is one of the most poorly written, immature, and badly edited zines I have ever seen. That said, I couldn't manage to put it down until I had read it cover-to-cover. First off, allow me to briefly explain what *Metal Rules!* is all about. A majority of the content of this zine is dedicated to interviews with metal bands, but they are not exactly what you would expect from most "traditional" metal mags (i.e. *Rip*, *Hit Parader*, etc.). Instead, the interviews consist of questions largely unrelated to anything involving metal (or good taste). Here is an excerpt from an interview with Eric from metal gods, Man-O-War:

**Jeremy:** Did you ever call shit "poop?"

**Eric:** Yeah

**Jeremy:** All right, just checking.

**Eric:** Was that part of the question?

**Jeremy:** Huh?



**Eric:** What kind of question is that?

As you can see not only do most of these interviews consist of questions written by third graders, but they print all of the interviews verbatim. This translates to roughly half of the interview composed of the band trying to figure out what the hell the editor is talking about. This issue has interviews with Sebastian Bach, Bruce Dickinson, Fred Norris, Kreator, Zakk Wyld and a slew of other metal performers who are just as confused as Man-O-War. Combine the interviews with the fact that the editor insists on having himself in every picture with the bands, and the writers make fun of each other's weight and sexual preferences in parenthesis every chance they get and...well, you get the idea. This is the Adam Sandler of metal zines and trust me, it will have you laughing out loud as well as banging your head. (2116 Sandra Rd, Voorhees, NJ 08043) **JB**

**Modern Fix** (offset/full color-glossy cover)

When I saw the word "Iron Maiden" on the cover of this magazine I could barely contain my excitement. I mean the Bruce Dickinson review in *Metal Rules!* was funny and all, but I was looking for answers to the serious questions like, "Why don't you guys play 'Can I Play with Madness' on this tour?" "How does Bruce prepare his voice for a show?" and "Why does Janick Gers still insist on doing all those weird and awkward looking metal moves on stage?" Instead, as I flipped ravenously through the magazine, all I found was a two column long show review. Where was the pictorial? (I know... I have problems). In the least, I was looking for a full-page picture of the boys in action, instead of three one-inch wide squares I could barely decipher. Needless to say, after seeing the way they took advantage of my love of Iron Maiden in this issue, I threw this zine aside and didn't pick it up again. Oh yeah they also have interviews with Downset and Earth Crisis...yikes. (3368 Governor Drive, Suite 318F, San Diego, CA, 92122) **JB**

**Mutant Renegade** (\$3 color-glossy cover / newsprint)

First off I want to know how this zine got Anthrax CD's to review-- if Scott Ian is reading this-- hook a brother up! The definite highlight of this issue of *Mutant Renegade* was their Joan Jett interview, (how cool is that?) specifically where she names Fugazi as one of the bands she is currently listening to. Who would have guessed it? There are also some other interviews here with local artists that are occasionally interesting, but there really wasn't anything that I was dying to read about. This zine seems more geared to their local scene (which happens to be Dayton, Ohio), which isn't inherently bad, but is kind of annoying when you are publishing a zine with a circulation over 5,000. What we have here is good effort, with lots of room for improvement. Finally, while we don't claim to be the most professional magazine editors over at LOI, their publisher offering to put people's names in the zine for buying him beer is over the line even by our standards. Just Shameless. (P.O. Box 3445, Dayton, Ohio, 45401) **JB**

**Skatedork** (\$2 offset)

I'll be honest, watching CKY videos and spending countless hours playing Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2 is about the extent of my skateboarding pursuits. However reading the latest issue of *Skatedork* makes you want to get out and skate, even if you know you can't. This zine is composed of ten or so short one or two page stories/columns about skateboarding. While this might sound a bit redundant, the variety and individuality of all of the contributors make this magazine stand out from the pack of traditional (and corporate) skate-mags like *Big Brother & Thrasher*. There is something refreshing about columnists from all over the country telling their personal revelations or just fun experiences with just one thing in common-- the way that skateboarding empowers them and is a constant in their lives. While I don't share in their passion, I

was nonetheless inspired by their writings. This zine could benefit from a little bit more creative layout and a section of one columns was impossible to read since text was obscured by a picture (for a more extreme example, see the Boy Sets Fire's "The Day the Sun Went Out" liner notes). But overall, this is a great zine and is highly recommended whether or not you can skate like Tony Hawk, or can only land an ollie in his video game. (Stephen Voss, 221 Spring Ridge Dr. Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922) **JB**

**Rumpshaker #5** (\$5 color-glossy cover / offset)

When people ask me what zines I like to read in my spare time-- and I mean read cover to cover, not just skim-- my first answer is *Rumpshaker*. While the zine's name may be misleading, as interviews with Kid Dynamite, Indecision, and Disembodied are a far cry from the Beastie Boys, this zine is the best. Period. Too bad it comes out once every two or three years. But, the interviews with Kid Dynamite (the last one ever), Atom and his Package, Indecision, Disembodied, and Los Crudos are the best it gets. No one is more creative or imaginative than Eric Weiss when it comes to grilling his favorite bands about their music. If that isn't enough, the interview with Ian MacKaye and his mother is the best Fugazi interview I have ever seen (and believe me I've seen a lot) hands down. If you buy one zine in the next two years make it this one. Oh yeah, if the cover price scares you fear not 'cause this issue is fucking huge. (Eric Weiss 72-38 65 Place Glendale, NY 11385) **RS**

**Spank #28** (offset/glossy cover)

Not to sound overly pretentious but I really think that more zines need to define who their target audience is before they go to the presses. For example the latest issue of *Spank* has interviews with By a Thread, The Muffs, Slim Moon, Spoon, Red Star Brigade, Dave Smalley, Jem Cohen, and The Get Up Kids. Ok I'll admit the we interviewed the Muffs in the women in punk issue but it seems like most of these acts are over-the-hill (Dave Smalley), not someone I would really be interested in reading about (Red Star Brigade?), or so overdone, what's the point? (The Get Up Kids). However the writings and columns manage to save this zine from its less than stellar interview lineup. The writings tend to be personal in nature and while some writings are much better than others, the stories they share tend to be pretty interesting. Couple that with a bunch of record reviews and some original artwork and you have a zine that is decent as it stands, has the potential to be great with some hard work and a better roster. (1004 Rose Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50315-3000) **JB**

**Status #12** (color-glossy cover)

Do you ever get the feeling that we at LOI are simply repeating ourselves over and over again *ad nauseum*? For example, if a record has At the Drive-in's name on it we give it a good review and rarely stray from that path. But more importantly we always say the same things about that band with minor critiques like "better recording here, better execution there, etc." Zine reviews are even worse because with every issue we put out there are a certain number of zines-- that are along the same lines as LOI and follow a similar production schedule-- that are friends of ours and we always say pretty much the same things about them. Once At the Drive-in has hit their stride they can do no wrong... until they find themselves in doldrums. Let's hope that doesn't happen to ATDI until they're 50 years old. Unfortunately, this issue of *Status* seems to be one of those issues that falls into the doldrum category. Every mid-level zine has those periods (and thankfully not as often as the bigger, more established zines do) and we at LOI could be considered guilty as well. I fear for

*Status'* sake that while the interviews with Radio 4, Strife, The National Acrobat, Reggie and the Full Effect (and more) are very good, they are doing nothing to help *Status* get better. In other words, they're well done but they're basically the same interviews *Status* has been doing for 5 or 6 issues now. I want them to push more boundaries and I know Seth, *Status'* esteemed editor, is capable of doing so. I mean, just read the Botch interview... it's terrible. I've said it once and I'll say it again, this is the only good hardcore zine on the west coast so buy it 'cause it's better than most anywhere else as well, but be prepared 'cause when *Status* unleashes what they're really capable of... that's when we're going to see some serious innovation. (PO Box 1300 Thousand Oaks, CA 91358) **RS**

**Wonka Vision #10** (color-glossy cover / newsprint)

For some reason I still get excited at the thought of zines. Even though there seem to be very few zines that come to my attention that are doing something great or truly different, I still love checking the mail in the afternoon and finding a zine instead of a record inside of an envelope. Perhaps it's because I love to see what people are up to around the country that I don't know, or I like to see others' take on music that I may know very little about. Whatever the case may be I just love zines and reading and music and magazines. I don't like *Wonka Vision*, though. I find it stupid, overly childish, full of too many inside jokes, bad music, and few good ideas (much less original ones). Zines obsessed with beer and tits do little for me. That's probably why I hate the Dwarves and much of the other music this zine covers. Justin, I'm sure you're a great guy and the life of the party, but you need to realize that just because any kid with an internet connection and a word processor can put out a magazine does not mean he or she should do so. (670 Inca Street Apt B-2 Denver, CO 80240) **RS**

**Zine Guide #4** (\$6 newsprint/glossy cover)

I know six bucks is a steep price to pay for a zine, but think of it this way: for a few bucks more than the latest issue of MRR you get the best reference tool for zines since *Factsheet #5*. And with all out the zines coming out nowadays, some type of guide is almost essential. The latest installment of *the Zine Guide* contains thousands of zine listing with short blurbs, reviews, and a full spectrum of rankings. A new addition to issue four is an index, highlighting the year's most interviewed bands and people. This is the like the US News College rankings, except my zine is ranked a hell of a lot higher than my college (which probably isn't a good thing...). While this isn't really something you would want to read from cover to cover, it's great if you are looking for a back issue of *Cometbus* or want to track down an interview with The Toasters (On second thought, if you're searching for interviews with the Toasters, you might want to take the six bucks and invest in some better CDs.) My only suggestion would be to integrate some columns and personal writings into this to make it a bit less sterile, but it still gets the job done as is. I get sick of doing five or ten zine reviews an issue, so I don't know how these kids manage to pull this thing off time after time. So Kudos to them, for creating a zine that is well worth the cover price if you are an active member in the zine community, or are just interested in what today's underground publications have to offer. (POB 5467, Evanston IL 60204) **JB**



# Track Attack

The LOI Review Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS

Dan Frantic: DF

Jason Murphy: JM

du proserpio: dup

Jonah Bayer: JB

Adam Parks: AP

Jonah Brucker-Cohen: JBC

## 7 Seconds "Scream Real Loud.Live"

**Side One Dummy CD-** The great thing about a live record is that you can pretend that you are at a show when you're actually just in your room. With this particular record, you can pretend that you are at a Seven Seconds show. When Kevin sings, you can sing along with him. When he yells "Are you guys ready?!" you can say "Yeah! Yeah, Kevin, yeah!!" without feeling foolish, because hundreds of kids who were actually at the show are yelling right along with you. Hooray! The only thing you can't do is mosh. **AP**

## 18 Visions "Until the Ink Runs Out" (Trust-kill)

**CD-** Every time I tell people I'm into this band they give me a disapproving look and mumble something about covered-up "hardline" tattoos and violence surrounding the SoCal hardcore scene. Any regular reader of LOI knows that I have a hard time separating politics and personalities from music, but as I've never met these guys and they seem to have seen the error of their ways, I'll forgive them for at least the duration of this review. On another topic, has anyone noticed that hardcore these days seems to be increasingly dominated by the framework bands like Botch, Coalesce, Converge, and Dillinger laid down in the mid-to-late-'90s? I have. Think pummeling bass drum fills, 124th note palm-muted guitars, and singing that seems to be a good mix of depravity, armageddon, and gut-wrenching screams from inside. With that said 18 Visions are clearly doing nothing new. Similarly, they aren't doing anything that hasn't been done just as well if not better before. But, I will give the band plenty of credit for making some damn good hardcore rock and roll that gyrates, pounds, chugs, and slugs its way through 11 songs so brutal they will tear the bark off trees. Some may say the SoCal hardcore scene is merely a bunch of scenesters posing as tough guys-- and rightly so from what I hear-- but if 18 Visions is any indication, LA is back on the map and has come to kick some ass. **RS**

## 90 Day Men "(it is) it Critical Band" (Southern)

**CD-** Combining moody guitar licks with thick bass lines and raucous vocals, Chicago's 90 Day Men sound like a band on the cusp of great songwriting. The problem with this record though is that it never really engages the listener before beginning to drag. Originally formed as a three piece in 1995, the Men added keyboardist Andy Lansangan to provide a new groove of experimentation into their already humbling three-piece configuration. Taking hints from Louisville's moody past, "(it is) it Critical Band" attempts to dispel any urban legend that the Men can't simultaneously play to both the emo and indie noise crowds. Did they succeed? Hard to tell. "Missouri Kids Cues" begins heavy and mellows out to a riff that sounds very similar to the album's first track. "Sort of is a Country in Love" attempt to skitter on the quiet side of emo with jazzy innuendos that coalesce in pity tom hits and distant vocals. Instead of breaking new ground, their debut album sounds more like a long jam session than anything really palatable. **JBC**

## 98 Mute "Slow Motion Riot" (Epitaph)

**CD-** I expected MTV-skatepunk, and I got... well, I'm not sure what I got. 98 Mute sound like a mix of Pennywise and Rancid. (Fletcher produced this). There's that speedy, 'sorta-hard-

core' guitar thing but the vocals are pretty rough punk with that dramatic edge. And the lyrics are actually pretty well written. Where does that leave us? It's catchy and it still has that old time punk aggression. If you're like me and you like fast stuff as well as street punk, this is a surprise worth some investigation. **dup**

## 100 Demons "In the Eyes of the Lord"

**(Good Life) CD-** First things first: the band's name sounds like it's the title for one of those Goosebumps my little brother read when he was 8 or so. Not a good first impression. I also have to pause and reflect on a line in the thanks list: "All girls around the world who decide to strip for a living - God Bless You!" Add to this the cheesy layout with lame Christian imagery, and you know the guys are real winners. And the music, you ask? Bad metal/hardcore with silly macho lyrics, unnecessary guitar solos, the same boring tough guy riffs, and absolutely nothing in the way of creativity or originality to offer the listener. Look for this in the dumpster outside my apartment, as I don't even think dumpster divers are interested. **JM**

## Adamantium "When it Rains, it Pours" (Indecision)

**CD-** I'm not impressed by this much. The worst part is the vocals, monotonous deep growls with loads of distortion on. Under the vox are repetitious and pretty generic hardcore riffs and breakdowns, without a whole lot of energy behind them. The lyrics are okay. Props for having some politics, but this whole project, including the lyrics, fails to push past well-established hardcore conventions. **AP**

## Adam West "Sizzleen" (Glazed)

**7"-** What we have here is another slab of wax from Glazed Records that is schooled heavily in 70's hard rock/metal. Adam West leans heavily towards Black Sabbath, which is made quite evident by their cover of "Supernaut". Yeah, Black Sabbath rocks, but what about Adam West, right? First off, like the last Glazed Record single I heard, the vocals are still buried way too deep in the mix. Second, I found myself hesitantly enjoying this, just because it is such a blast of hard rock. But I found myself gravitating to the Sabbath cover, which is never a good thing (unless the cover is radically different from the original, which is not the case here). Yeah, I'd spin this again, but I probably wouldn't tell my friends about it. **JM**

## AFI "The Art of Drowning" (Nitro)

**CD-** AFI is to hardcore what Wagner is to opera. Sometimes creepy, sometime subtle, always powerful. Sometimes I sit in my room and ponder why AFI hasn't found the type of success on the east coast they have on the west coast. After all, they're pretty much the best thing to happen to Bay Area hardcore-- much less California hardcore-- well, ever. On this new record we get Davey's trademark wail, those gang vocals that make every chorus more anthemic than 10 Gorilla Biscuits records combined, and a bit of goth mystery to break up the mix. Overall, I prefer their last record, "Black Sails in the Sunset" a bit more, simply because there is a bit less uniformity in the musical vibe from song to song. Nonetheless, with any AFI release you know it will be strong. And with songs like "Ever and a Day" and "A Story at Three" this is more than a match for anything the band has done in the past 3 years. All you west coast kids probably already have this, and for all you east coasters who can't tell your ass from your A-string

you might want to check this out. **RS**

## Akarso/Seven Days of Samsara (Ricky Schroeder Fan Club)

**7"-** Any single whose jacket is a recycled US Postal Service Express mailer is all right with me. Akarso grace us with their last song, and it sounds like they will be missed. Hardcore that has not forgotten its punk roots and isn't afraid to experiment a little (the crazy jam at the end, a fitting note to go out on). Seven Days of Samsara also give us a great track, this one starting with a great melodic guitar part that doesn't prepare you for the hardcore blast to come. Both bands are among the craziest that I can think of right now (particularly from the hardcore genre). This is limited, and worth your time, so what are you waiting for? **JM**

## All Bets Off "Friendly Fire" (Cynic Squad)

**CD-** After the diaspora of hardcore that was Youth of Today and Gorilla Biscuits out of NYC and into every town in the world small and large alike, there were those bands that rose above the limits and restraints their predecessors-- being influences-- placed upon them and there were those that did not. There were some bands that tried to promote change with their music, both in the lyrical content and musicianship. There were also some bands that were content to live in the world of their predecessors. Never seeking greener, more mature pastures-- or even something different. All Bets Off is one of them. Ask any kid in the Bay Area hardcore scene, or at least any kid who adheres to the OBHC school of hardcore, and they will surely claim to be friends with one of the members of this band. I've actually seen them a few times. They're fun live, nothing great, but their shows aren't packed full of people so there is still room to dance and have a good time. There is, however, a reason why their shows aren't packed. Perhaps that reason is that the best song I can find in their repertoire as recorded herein is a Judge cover. Make up your own mind based on the given information. **RS**

## American Nightmare (Bridge 9)

**CD-** The axeman for these guys came from Ten Yard Fight, who I actually never heard (nor had any burning desire to hear), but made fun of anyway because the band was based on football. I'll apologize for that at this point. American Nightmare is a good band. They play some pretty conventional (but real tight and real fast) hardcore music. The speed, energy, and refined quality of this record make it stand out from a lot of other hardcore in my mind. Further separating this band from the plethora of fast and furious East Coast hardcore bands are the aggressive and desperate lyrics and vocals. One amazing thing about these aspects is that they are nearly perfectly matched: this voice was made to speak these words. The desperation of both convey almost nihilistic sentiments. Perfectly blanketing all that this band seems to stand for is their aptly chosen name, American Nightmare. **AP**

## The Apples in Stereo "The Discovery of a World Inside the Moone" (SpinART/Elephant 6)

**CD-** I was ecstatic about the Apples' last EP, the brilliant "Her Wallpaper Reverie," which practically reinvented the Beatles. And for months I was eagerly anticipating the Apples' next full-length, which I had somehow been led to believe would be a double album. Well, "The Discovery of a World Inside the Moone" isn't a double album, but I'll try to not let that prejudice me. What disappoints me more is that it abandons the Apples' brief but fruitful experimentation with lush psychedelica, and

returns to the happy (happy, happy, happy) style of earlier albums like "Fun Trick Noisemaker."

The Apples wear their Beach Boys influences like badges, and they're not unashamed to even dip into the ultra-happy sounds of the Free Design. It's good if that's what you're into, but frankly, I'm disappointed that they've chosen not to follow the path they had laid out on their last release. **DF**

## As Friends Rust "The Fist of Time" (Doghouse)

**CD-** I really like this band. Driving, politically conscious hardcore that is in many ways much more honest and emotional than their better known Gainesville counterparts, Hot Water Music. Think a faster Hot Water Music with less growly vocals, less breakdowns, and a Circle Jerks cover thrown in the mix and you're getting close. I am waiting for a new full length from these guys, but all I get are 7 previously released songs. Life sucks sometimes. Especially when I have most of the other releases these songs appeared on. Life also sucks when the only other piece of music you feel like listening to is late '90s David Bowie... then again, at least Bowie's new stuff is, in fact, new. C'mon guys, I can't wait much longer and "Little Wonder" is fucking killing me. **RS**

## The Atari Star "Moving in the Still Frame" (Johanns Face)

**CD-** With mellow guitars and frank vocals, Chicago's The Atari Star sound like they could use a little confidence boost. Not to say that these guys can't play, rather their timidity seems to get the best of them. The album opens with the somber, "Somewhere Between Zero and One" where singer Marc Ruvalo can't seem to muster enough vocal strength to carry the song to completion. "All Lit Up Like a Sad Little Christmas Tree" sounds like an homage to the late Bedhead with whispered vocals coalescing beside country-themed ballads of holidays past. "I Don't Know Where to Begin" is their most rockin' number but it gets too repetitive with its choruses before allowing us to fully experience the song. I don't think the Atari Star should go back to the drawing board, they just need to combine more energy and enthusiasm into their delivery. BTW, they also really need a new website. **JBC**

## At the Drive-in "" (Grand Royal)

**CD-** Let's be honest with ourselves here: everyone already has this record. There are some CDs that are so hyped, so highly anticipated that even if every stupid zine in the world panned them, they would still fly off the shelves with a vengeance. Of course, the new At the Drive-in disc is one of them. After appearances on Farm Club and Conan O'Brien, there is really very little that I can do to help this band out. But, just so the publicists can have their tear-sheets and so I can get on with the next bazillion records I have to review, I'll tell you what I think. This record is amazing. Few bands manage to cram so much originality, so much tension and emotion, not to mention body-shaking power, into one CD. At the Drive-in has produced a fabulous record here that takes their already impressive sound to the next level of imagination and clarity. This is one of the few bands I actually hope becomes enormous in the main stream, because really few bands deserve it more. **RS**

## The August Prophecy "Five Endeavors in Self-Murder" (Ohev)

**CDep-** We were down



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to six CDs. I would take three, and Jonah would take three. I said that I refused to review any CDs called the anything "conspiracy", "theory", "project", or "prophecy". That was my only ultimatum, and somehow I ended up with this. I must admit it is far better than I expected. The layout is absolutely hideous, but the metal inside is not too bad. The mix is alright, songwriting's pretty good, and the vocals are tough (though they could use some reverb). Fast and slow, stop and go, but always heavy. This ain't for no tortoise-shell frame wearin' folk. This is for dudes who truly believe that "metal rules". **AP**

**Automatic 7 "Beggars' Live" (Vagrant) CD-** Is it just me or does anyone else get Automatic 7 confused with the Automatics? I also get No Knife (who I had the displeasure of seeing tonight) confused with No Motiv. Sometimes I even confuse bands whose names have nothing in common with each other, for example: One King Down and Beta Minus Mechanic. Maybe it's the fact that both bands have three words in their name, or possibly because I'm not too familiar with either band. Regardless of this, the name Automatic 7 didn't quite register until this entered my CD player. Then I remembered these guys as the band who "sound like Social Distortion." The drug-induced lyrics and Mike Ness-esque vocals recall a certain Orange County punk band, with a bit of Fat Wreck tinge to them. It took a while for this to grow on me, but upon multiple listens the melodies began to get stuck in my head and I found myself listening to this quite a bit. While these guys aren't going to get any points for originality, they do score in the catchy song department-- and that's like going to the foul line and hitting both free throws. Shaq-a-rific. **JB**

**Avail "One Wrench" (Fat Wreck) CD-** We received this disc in the mail a few months ago, but for some reason I had to psyche myself up to listen to it. Sure, I love Avail. Who doesn't? Although I liked their last two records--released by Lookout!--I wasn't sure if I liked the direction they were taking the band: their last two releases hinted at a less biting, cheesier Avail. Plus, I had heard a lot of bad stuff about this record. Nothing in particular--other than that the drumming wasn't as good as in the past--just that it lacked the angst that other Avail records had in spades. So finally I popped this disc in my stereo and am delighted to find that I am hard pressed to find a weak spot here. Were all the naysayers... gasp, wrong? Perhaps they were. I mean, they're just kids while it is left to zine editors to be the true critics. And this critic says that the songs "fast one," "High Lonesome," and "n30" are up there with the best Avail has ever delivered. Sure "Dixie" remains Avail's best record, and it may be said correctly that Avail--much less any other band in the genre--will never top that particular record. But, do not worry loyal Avail fans, this is a very very good piece of plastic. Avail remains at the top of the punk/hardcore heap. **RS**

**Back Off Cupids (Drunken Fish) CD-** It's rare that I get something truly original to review. Most of the time it's easy just to plunk a record into it's well defined category and discuss it's strengths and weakness (or if you read my reviews, make fun of the weaknesses). However once in a while a record comes along that

I just can't make fun of because it's so unique and enjoyable to listen to. If you haven't already guessed Rocket from the Crypt's frontman Jon Reis has done this with his new, basically solo (he plays almost all of the instruments) project called the Back Off Cupids. Be forewarned this sounds nothing like RFTC, but the Back Off Cupids still rock in a completely different way. Jon definitely still has the minimal production lo-fi feel going for him here and it complements the music perfectly. I would say the standout track on this is the first one "Meek Inherits Space," but this album is consistently well done. There has been a buzz on this band since they started mysteriously appearing on compilations but this full length proves it, the Back Off Cupids luckily show no signs of backing off anytime soon. **JB**

**Beachwood Sparks (Sub Pop) CD-** When I think of country music, my first thought is "Garth Brooks," and then my brain turns off. And while I have been getting better lately, I still cringe when I hear most country music (particularly the stuff that is topping the charts). Now while this CD does not change my prejudices, it definitely wins me over on its individual merits. Granted, this isn't straight up country (c'mon, it's on Sub Pop), but there is enough twang to get the cast of "Hee-Haw" back on the air. There are also a lot of little things (effects, vocal harmonies, minimal electronics) to keep everything interesting. In the grand scheme of things, though, this is a pop record, and a damn fine one to boot. The whole thing has a light breezy quality to it that makes me want it to be summer again. This isn't the soundtrack for a fast-driving road trip, but I can see sunsets, long fields of grain, and plenty of smiles the second I hit play. Highly recommended. **JM**

**The Beautys "A#1 Sex Shop Employee" (Mutant Pop) 7"-** Mutant Pop takes another large step towards completely ousting Lookout Records from their position as America's premiere pop-punk label. I haven't always been a fan of everything Mutant Pop has done, but this one is a winner. The Beautys' singer, Chica Baby, has a voice that reminds me very much of Mia Zapata, the supremely talented singer for the Gits, whose life was cut tragically short a few years ago. The Beautys remind me a lot of the Gits, and coming from me that's an A#1 compliment. Mid-tempo punk with backing male vocals and, of course, a rather kick-ass lead singer. **DF**

**Books Lie "It A Weapon" (Satellite Transmissions) CD-** Interesting NYC indie hardcore played rather loosely with a strong social conscious and sense of humor. Song titles include, "Capitalism Is Some Kinda Crazy Ass Vampire" and "Your Simpsons Backlash Is A Fucking Joke". They make the point in the liner notes that they are not the Lorax and thusly they do not speak for the trees. The music is a pummeling speedy sound with the occasional strong chorus backups and some melodic parts in between with lots of good noise. Really cool shit here that will satisfy fans of several different styles. Recommended. **dup**

**Black Cat Music "The Only Thing We'll Ever Be Is All Alone" (Cheetah's) CD-** Garage rock with the blues pouring out of the guitar arrangements. The sound here is tough garage/soul like Danko Jones not the flamboyant stuff like the Makers. It's loud yet pretty clear and not

falling into pieces such as a band like The Lord High Fixers. This volatile, drinking music has got the headnod going, but not without the requisite sneer at the same time. Great outlaw punky rock and roll with a dark sentiment running throughout. File somewhere between the Sonics, UK Subs and MC5. Find this. **dup**

**Black Cat Music "One Foot in the Grave" (Lookout!) 7"-** I tried so hard not to like this (it's on Lookout, strike one; the cover is a really bad picture, strike 2; it's still on Lookout, strike three), but this is pretty good. It's dispensable, but my head was bobbing and there was a smile on my face, so how can I write it a bad review? We're talking some really catchy punk rock with some indie rock influences; this wouldn't seem too out of place on an older Rancid album (it would be the song without any ska in it). Maybe I should change my opinion of the Lookout catalog (nah). **JM**

**Blonde Redhead "Melodic Citronique" (Touch and Go) CDep-** So when I was in L.A. I went to a taping of the television show "Everybody Loves Raymond" (No I'm not kidding, and don't ask why). Anyway while the show only lasts about a half an hour the tapings usually last much longer. In fact I didn't know what I was in store for when I got to the NBC studios prepared to watch what I thought would be an exciting experience. However it ended up taking close to five hours and in between set changes this guy would come out and try to tell jokes which weren't funny. The worst part is that you couldn't leave, actually that was the second worst part if you have ever actually watched the show (I hadn't previous to my nightmare). So how does this story relate to Blonde Redhead? It doesn't really except that in the episode they went to Italy and Blonde Redhead sings in French which is sort of like Italian right? I tried to see Blonde Redhead out west but the show was sold out-- see what I'm getting at? **JB**

**The Blood Brothers "This Adultery is Ripe" (Second Nature) CD-** I'm absolutely in love with this CD. It's one of the most cohesive records I've ever heard. There's brilliant continuity throughout the music, the lyrics, even the layout. And all of these elements are pretty original. The music consists of two vocalists over one guitar, one bass, and drums. One of the voices is admittedly kind of obnoxious at first, but once you learn to accept that guy for who he is, this album will blow you away. It rocks out most of the time with some parts that let up for a dichotomous sound, but the progressions always come back with climaxes that just bleed energy. The Blood Brothers do an excellent job layering sound and filling parts up with the double vocals, great basslines, riffs and chord progressions, and some mathematics to boot. Lyrics that focus around body image, sexuality and the like, as far as I can tell in a pretty thoughtful and mature way. Great use of imagery to paint absolutely vivid representations of somewhat taboo, or at least daunting, issues. The lyrics are beautiful, very visual and powerful, but when shrieked over the dynamic and aggressive instrumental work, the result is a piece of art that constitutes the perfect blend of cognitive and visceral music. **AP**

**Blue Skies Burning "Last Leg of my First Race" (One Day Savior) CDep-** Blue Skies Burning play sometimes-creepy, sometimes-very-derivative hardcore along the lines of Countervail. Countervail does it much better. A better grasp on when to have melodic breakdowns and

when to rock out (when BSB rock out they manage to impress) would help a lot. A singer that didn't sound like Mike Ski of Brother's Keeper would also be an added improvement. Artwork that looked as good as its ambitious design would attempt would be a good start too. A bit more time crafting songs, playing live, and getting to know themselves before they went ahead and released records on an up-and-coming label would be a necessity. **RS**

**Bluetip "Polymer" (Dischord) CD-** I always thought of Bluetip as a band that seemed too "classic rock" for Dischord. There's just something "big rock guitar" about their songs that roots them in that genre. Maybe it's guitarist/vocalist Jason Farrell's stint as a barroom country singer that swayed me, but mostly Bluetip have a way of making every chorus sound like an homage to that 70s share-the-microphone tradition. "Polymer" marks the band's third album and with its clean production, sounds like their most coherent yet. "New Young Residents" begins with a steady kick drum/ bass attack that effortlessly flows along with Farrell's head bobbing singing style. Songs like "Astigmatic" and "New Shoe Premonition" seem to focus less on raw power than embedding emotional lift into their straight-ahead approach. Bluetip are more about playing their hearts out with every riff than trying to innovate. Maybe that's the reason they've been around so long. **JBC**

**Boundless Human Stupidity "Reprisal" (Good Life) CD-** I've come to the conclusion that no matter how loud you turn up some metal/hardcore bands, they're still going to be boring as paint peeling. Sure, the initial shock of the deep metal growls, the speed of the songs, and the blast beats will wake you up, but then you realize that this is yelling with no substance. Boundless Human Stupidity (beyond having a horrible name) can scream all they want and create a crazy racket, but there will never be anything supporting this noise. The lyrics are so cliched that Slipknot is thinking about stealing them, the musicians have no investment in what they are playing beyond the technical aspect, and the band badly decided to include in-between song sound samples that break the flow of the album and are not interesting. The one with the woman being choked and gurgling is downright offensive, even if they are in some way trying to prove a point. This isn't scary or confrontational, it's juvenile, played out, and boring. **dup**

**Boxcar "The Weather is Here, Wish You Were Beautiful" (Red Leader) CD-** This is pop-punk and for some reason I don't hate it. Maybe because the music is fast but sad and the vocals don't feign some kind of cheer that doesn't go with the music. The beats bounce back and forth between fast and slow punk stuff, covered in conventional chord progressions of three and four chords. Lyrics about girls and life. So what? I'll never actually listen to this again, but it's not terrible. If pop-punk is your thing, Boxcar might also be your thing. **AP**

**Bracket "When All Else Fails" (Fat Wreck) CD-** Cali rock/punk from an act that perhaps saw the future of pop punk a few years early. It's still got the snide vocals that typify the pop punk genre and it's hooky as well as



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The LOI Review Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS  
du proserpio: dup  
Jonah Brucker-Cohen: JBC

Dan Frantic: DF  
Jonah Bayer: JB

Jason Murphy: JM  
Adam Parks: AP

punchy. But whereas lots of people will dismiss Bracket as Blink182 wannabes, they've pretty much stayed on the same path all the while and clearly have only tightened their formula over the years. It's also pretty striking that the band keeps their style pretty basic yet pulls off growing sophistication in their lyric writing. Better than you might expect, and more mature than most of Fat's output. **dup**

**Brandtson "Trying to Figure Each Other Out (Deep Elm) CD-** This band was the soundtrack to my summer. However, not in the "I drove around all summer with the windows down, blasting their music all over town" kind of way, which the previous sentence may have implied. More in the sense that they are the only emo band in Cleveland with a decent following, and seemed to open every show. And while there are some bands like At The Drive-In and Hot Water Music who I never seem to get sick of seeing--Brandtson doesn't fall into this category. In fact Brandtson doesn't fall anywhere near this category. This record is exactly what I expected from these guys. Cheesy emo with slightly above par musicianship and well developed vocal harmonies. Unfortunately, while some of the melodies are catchy, they are often obscured by the lyrics. Sample lyric, "She said that I'm a shining star in her sky. And I feel that far away." Jeez, would you guys like some wine with your cheese? (I hope someone got that joke). And singing about stars is so last summer. Overall, this record has some good songs, some bad songs, and really doesn't do much for me. Oh yeah they have one of their friends remix one of their songs on his sequencer, which is painful to listen to. Here's a tip, leave sequencing to people who know what they're doing, like me. **JB**

**Bright Eyes "Fevers and Mirrors" (Saddle Creek) CD-** Conor Oberst is fucking anguished. Seriously. This guy must be the most tortured musical artist since, I don't know, ever. This is readily apparent throughout "Fevers and Mirrors," particularly in the last track, a transcription of a radio interview with Conor in which he mumbles self-deprecating insults and frequently lets his tortured voice trail off without even finishing his sentence. I feel terrible for Conor, seriously. He seems absolutely tortured. But luckily for the listener -- and for Conor himself, I suppose -- he is able to parlay his misery into beautifully fragile music, tortured and self-obsessed pleas for help that occasionally explode into anguished wails. And when Conor wails, he really wails, as if this song is going to be his last opportunity to ever sing and he needs to get everything out in one furious moment of catharsis. Like bedroom pop with slit wrists, there is something dangerous and disturbing about Bright Eyes, but also something undeniably beautiful. **DF**

**BS2000 "Simply Mortified" (Grand Royal) CD-** I hate to compare the much-hyped BS2000 to the Beastie Boys, but of course it's hard to divorce the two. After all, the B-boys have been the music media's prodigal sons for three decades now. It's like trying to listen to Paul McCartney's newest songs and forget that he was in the Beatles. Plus I'm, a huge Beastie Boys fan, and Adrock, BS2000's co-founder is my favorite one (damn you, Kathleen Hannah!). This album, the second by BS2000 if memory

serves, reminds me of the Beastie Boys' 1998 album, "Hello Nasty," with it voice-overs, electronic keyboard riffs, and rough harmonizing. Is this really that surprising, though? After all, he's been doing this Beastie Boys bizness for so long, he may have lost some of his musical individuality, something that is usually necessary when creating a new band. Maybe Adrock is so used to the creative input of the other B-boys members that his side-stuff is indirectly influenced by MCA and Mike D. Food for thought. However, Adam proves his distinct talent on "Simply Mortified", along with partner in crime, Amery "Awol" Smith (who has a very credible resume of his own, playing with the Suicidal Tendencies while I was learning to walk, and playing drums with the Beastie Boys for the past few years). Over all, this is a good record -- despite it's uncanny resemblance to something already done by the Beasties. The sound is definitely a much cruder version of what the B-boys do, but it's got its merits: experimentation in an unpretentious, endearing way; impressive lo-fi audio techniques; and the best Casio-keyboard-cum-drum-machine beats I've ever heard. Go buy the album: it's different in that it experiments with the punk sound while trying out some other funky noises and sounds simultaneously. [Guest reviewer Lyndsay Siegel]

**Burn it Down "Let the Dead Bury the Dead" (Escape Artist) CD-** Okay, I'm not even going to get into how much I hate it when hardcore bands have 3-word names. So cliché: I will get into Burn it Down's amazing sense of power; from their snare drum hits that literally explode out of the speakers, to the guitar crunch that is more evil than a bag of stilts, or the bass that is happily more than a match for the rest of the band. Burn it Down play very very heavy metalcore that is probably closer to something on Roadrunner than anything on Hydra Head. And they rock. Yes they do: they fucking tear the roof off even the best stereo. Now, if their singer would just stick to the screaming and realize that he really can't sing to save his life we'd be in business. Very good work here. **RS**

**Burning Heads "Escape" (Victory) CD-** My, oh my, isn't Victory getting to be a big label? Now I'm the LAST person (at least on this staff) to give them a hard time for succeeding in the music BUSINESS, but it intrigues me when I open a shrink-wrapped CD and see a theft deterrent glued into the tray! That's some serious major label type of ish- I wonder if Victory really sees so much of their product stolen to warrant a move that I've only seen labels like Sony and Warner do. Weird. Burning Heads are apparently a long-standing French act that dishes out fast 80's style punk/hardcore not unlike Pennywise. This record came out a year ago in Europe. You know the style- fast, catchy singalongs with the backups everywhere. Good hardcore breaks and the fast 'busts' that used to define the style. I like this, mostly because it's edgier than their American counterparts. Oh, there are 2 Quicktime movies included for CD-ROM knuckleheads. Maybe that's why they think it'll get pocketed at retail outlets. **dup**

**Cadillac Blindsides "Read the Book Seen the Movie" (Soda Jerk) CD-** I recently saw this band in Berkeley opening up for, among others, Isis, Candiria, and Dillinger Escape Plan, but they sound nothing like those three bands. For-

tunately for this Minneapolis foursome, they were rocking enough to get even the most staunch metal crowd worked up, and hot diggity dog do these guys rock. Plain and simple. I will make this short and sweet and say that this band is wonderful—one of the best I've discovered in a while—and they remind me of a Getup Kids if the GUKs had guts. Every song here is a gem and will have you rocking your room into a frenzy. If you buy one pop-punk record all year make it this one. **RS**

**The Casket Lottery "Lost at Sea" (Status) 7-** I had seen this band's name several times before in zines and whatnot, but never actually had the pleasure of hearing them. Thankfully, my first exposure is a positive one. The A-side is a slow and somber piece of indie rock, with some of the sweetest guitar I have ever heard. It sounds like a song indie rock kids play after the big break-up with a significant other. The B-side is more rocking (in the Hot Water Music vein) and to the point, but still a keeper. The only question left, I guess, is where I sign up for more of this action? **JM**

**The Cassettes "Lights" (Carcass) 7-** I will keep this record, but I will probably not listen to it again. It's just tough to pass up indie rock that sounds this good, no matter how many bands sound like this now. The first side is rather cookie cutter, but the b-side has a nice keyboard part paired with some Smiths-like guitar washing in and out. The only problem is that this is from Sweden, which means that you would have to work to find it, and it's not that good. How does music like this cross such far boundaries and end up sounding the same? **JM**

**Catch 22 "Alone in a Crowd" (Victory) CD-** Remember those kids in high school who went to band camp every summer? The kids with the thick-rimmed glasses who were really into Star Trek? The ones who were all good musicians, but you never really hung out with because they weren't really...cool. Flash to the 21st Century: they're still not cool, but somehow these kids got a record released on one of the biggest hardcore labels around. Believe me, I can understand a label wanting to branch out and represent more styles of music (with Victory's current hardcore roster they almost need to. Grade and BSF are obvious exceptions). Catch 22 remind me of a bit heavier version of Less Than Jake, with breakdowns that sound almost hardcore at points (well, about as hardcore as you can sound with blaring horns.) These guys are good at what they do; the main problem is that they're about five years too late on the whole ska-core thing. Who knows, maybe ska-core will catch on again soon, (let's all pray that it doesn't) but for now I'm going to pass on this. Recommended if you think the "skank" is a dance, not your girlfriend. **JB**

**The Causey Way "Testimony" (Fueled by Ramen) CDep-** What sounds like a synthesizer on this record is nothing less than an intergalactic transmitter. I think that the Causey Way just wants someone from their home planet to come get them, which is okay by me because they are weird and it scares me. While on Earth, the Causey Way have written some pretty tight and weird space/indie rock anthems. The best of which goes:

One guy: "Sell"  
Other guy: "Out"  
Both guys: "Sellout"  
First guy again: "Get"  
Other guy again: "Down"

Both: "Get down"

This type of word play is genius by today's standards, but for the Causey Way, it may just be part of the alien mating process. If you are weird or are from certain parts of space you will like this. **AP**

**Cave In "Jupiter" (Hydra Head) CD-** There are very few albums in the hardcore genre that can be considered critic's albums. I think much of the stuff associated with the Hydra Head camp comes about as close as the genre comes to garnering praise from people other than knuckle-headed, basketball-jersey-clad boys. Bands like Botch, Isis, and Coalesce—all very heavy bands—are a few that could easily find acceptance by the mainstream media, if the mainstream suddenly looked away from harder bands like Sevendust and Slipknot, to true art coming from the underground. Cave In, arguably the best thing to happen to Boston hardcore... well, ever, is no stranger to criticism: both praising and damning. The very magazine you hold in your hands has written both kinds of reviews in its pages. Yet, I will be the first one to tell you that while their last EP may have been a bit ahead of its time to be taken very seriously after the brilliant sonic onslaught of "Until Your Heart Stops." I'm sure a lot of people will criticize Cave In's newest offering for being a critic's record in that they have replaced the blast beats with digital delay pedals a'plenty, the screaming for actual singing, and crunch for... gasp... melody. They may be accurate in their criticism for it's not often that a band makes such a radical shift in dynamics and texture over the course of one record. This is, however, a visionary record. While some of the songs may be a bit hard to fully grasp in their complexity and freedom, and I doubt anyone will walk down the street humming the song "Big Riff," this is one record that I think deserves the epithet of a critic's record more than any other I've heard in a while. Perhaps, bands like Radiohead—who seem to churn out acclaimed records by the bucketful—are celebrated by critics because the public just isn't smart enough or well versed enough with rock history to truly grasp the achievements presented in their music. However, this time the critics are not wrong. This is a very very good record. I only hope that it does not become one of those pieces of plastic I keep in my CD booklet simply to say that I own it, rather than actually listening to it on a day to day basis... like I do with so many records that the critics hate. **RS**

**Cease (Natural High) CDep-** Euro-hardcore with a pretty versatile singer. He can do the pained slow hardcore thing and several varieties of a metal rasp. The music is what you'd expect- metal done up in a hardcore fashion. However, this is better than most of the Euro-metal I come across these days. The fast parts are gratifying, and the breaks and slow parts aren't so technical that they lose me. But, the china cymbals come in by the second song, so this is definitely for those who accept metal into their lives. However, they get points for the slow parts and low vocals which add a lot of flavor to the combo. Good stuff. **AP**

**Chixdiggit "From Scene to Shining Scene" (Honest Don's) CD-** Plenty of bands are lively onstage. The Bouncing Souls treat each show like it's the U.S. Track and Field Finals, and the frontmen of bands At the Drive-In



# Track Attack

and the Make-Up gyrate, spasm, and contort so frequently that they appear more like marionettes than they do humans. But only Chixdiggit exudes such an innocent, "please love us" energy on stage that the audience is moved – nay, compelled – to clumsily dance along to their hands-in-the-air, legs-spread-as-far-apart-as-humanly-possible form of pop-punk. To Chixdiggit, every live gig is their best ever, and every show has the potential to put "Live at the Budokan" to shame. At home in Canada they may be overshadowed by fellow pop-junkie bands like Sloan and the Flashing Lights, but here in America they stand out as one of the most enthusiastic (although hardly the most original) pop-punkers ever to come down the pike. Their third full-length, "From Scene to Shining Scene," is musically parallel to their first efforts, but it easily communicates the exuberance of their live show. This album may only be gilding the lily for those fans who already own Chixdiggit's first two releases, but it's as good of a starting point as any for those interested in the north-of-the-border Ramones. **DF**

**Close Call "Too Close" (Espo) Cdep-** One of the last places where youth crew hardcore seems to continue to flourish well into the next century is Boston. Having seen other Boston youth crew staples like Ten Yard Fight and In My Eyes enjoy mild success, it seems inevitable that more will follow. And, as far as the style of music goes, this is pretty good. With none of the straight-edge rhetoric that has muddled past bands of the genre, Close Call has a pretty good sense of melody and rhythm, and understands exactly what it takes to succeed in a potentially limiting style of hardcore: shout-out choruses, power chords, straight ahead drum beats, and the requisite breakdown. Close Call does it about as well as any band I've heard, but let's face it, why would any band want to stick to this style? It has become so prosaic and commonplace over 12 years since the youth crew movement really saw its apex. I hate to say it, but I think "why did you stab me in the back" lyrics are becoming really dull. But, that's just my opinion. **RS**

**Closer Than Kin/None But Burning "Split" (For the masses) CD-** No artwork, no label, no idea, but they did all sign the CD sleeve for me! But, what the hell, CTK is pretty good. It's almost a bridge between metal-core and modern skate-punk, if you're ready to believe that. Catchy, almost always fast stuff with raw vocals and some very metallic parts. The drums don't sound that good, but the total is pretty solid by my estimation. Closer Than Kin is from somewhere in Massachusetts, tour a lot, and are trying to start a street team (?). None But Burning are godawful. Inspect carefully. **dup**

**Coach "Package Deal" (Doghouse) CD-** Man, I can't remember that last time I've gotten mail from Doghouse, it's been a while. When I saw the name "Coach" on this CD, I instantly thought of Craig T. Nelson's long-defunct family sitcom (You've gotta love syndication). How cool would it be if Craig T. Nelson decided to front an indie rock band? Besides, although Craig is getting pretty old, the demise of Slapshot and Ten Yard Fight lead me to believe that Coach could easily fill the void of hardcore bands with a sports theme. However, my daydream was shattered when I opened the CD, and realized

that these guys look more like the kids who got their asses kicked by the athletes than the football superstars. Additionally, their music is about ten times better than any of aforementioned sports-themed bands (which I know isn't saying a lot, but I truly like this). The record varies from labelmates Moods for Moderns' straight-up rock n' roll sound to Brandston-like slow parts that retain the rare quality of complementing the more rockin' parts, and not taking away from the overall energy. The background vocals also really help this three-piece layer their sound and provide variation within the songs. Buy this, or you're benched for the rest of the season! (I can't believe I actually wrote that...) **JB**

**Congratulations on Your Decision to Become a Pilot (Aisle 2) CD-** Winners of the longest band name since ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of The Dead, CYDBP turn out an interesting mixture of brute force indie mayhem with just enough eloquence to double as a pop outfit. "Sgt. Carter" exemplifies this effort with somber, touching vocal melodies gliding across quiet strumming guitar. In contrast, "When we were kids we built a treehouse from our neighbor's windows and if you get far enough away it looks like a giant eyeball" (another winner in the long song title category), races out of the starting gates with bludgeoning guitars that manage to stay on the atonal side. One minute they spark a noise onslaught of over-arching choruses, the next they hit the mellow side with "Room to swing a cat". CYDBP have the right idea in their noisy approach, but their focus throughout the album switches gear much too often. **JBC**

**Congress "Stake Thru The Heart" (Good-life) CD-** This starts off with synth John Carpenter "Halloween" type music, which is good. I also noticed that they list among their influences, "Celtic Frost, Kreator, Prong, Death, Killing Joke, Skinny Puppy, Leeway, Crumb-suckers." So far, it's pretty good. Then the vocals come in and... oh, shit, this is terrible. The music is pretty good for thrashy metal with a lick of the 'core. But the vocalist and whoever writes the lyrics has to go: "Time to breed some courage, time to cross that line/ although we might stray, I'm not scared of Y2K". Oh Europe, what happened? **dup**

**The Contradictions/All Bets Off (Contra Rock) 7"-** I seriously hate when bands do not label 7-inches as to whether it is 33 or 45 RPM. I still don't know which speed for both these bands. At 33, they both are really dark and sludgy punk rock. At 45 (the suspected right speed after hearing the second side a few times), they are boring punk rock with a really nasally singer (The Contradictions) or awkward tough guy hardcore (All Bets Off). At either speed, this will never be played again on my turntable. **JM**

**Cross My Heart "Temporary Contemporary" (Deep Elm) CD-** Cross My Heart isn't only on Deep Elm, but also thank two bands with the word "stars" in their name, which can only mean one thing—emo. However, these guys aren't nearly as cheesy as one might gather from the previous sentence. As stated in last issue's review, Cross My Heart is made up of members from the often overlooked D.C. punk band, Blank. This new full length follows in the same direction as their recent EP on Dim Mak

Records. Allow me to reiterate this is much better than most stuff I receive. However, I expect more from these guys considering they were in Blank (Which sounded nothing like Blanks 77 in case you were wondering...I said they were good). Cross My Heart basically has the whole Deep Elm "emo rock" sound down and sound kind of like (insert band on Emo Diaries' comp name here). Every once in a while, their singer breaks into a screaming part that tends to really break things up. Unfortunately, this isn't done very often and vocals remain fairly stagnant throughout this album. I'm not terribly impressed with this release or Cross My Heart's last EP for that matter, but I believe these guys still have it in 'em. Let's just hope they can nail it on their next record, because as we at Law Of Inertia like to say, "Three strikes and you're out!" **JB**

**Count Me Out (Indecision) CD-** The youth crew revival is officially over, and has been for over a year now. The forefathers of this neo-movement like Floorpunch and Ten Yard Fight are ancient news. What could be the reasons for your youth crew's demise? Could it be the generic musicianship? How about overly cliched lyrics about being "stabbed in the back"? Maybe it had something to do with the homophobic rantings of Floorpunch's Chris Zusi (Who if I recall correctly said that straight-edge kids who don't claim they're straight-edge are "One step away from taking a dick in the ass" in *Tension Building Fan-zine*). I'm assuming that it was a combination of these reasons. Whatever the reasons, I'm not complaining. However, Count Me Out reminded me of the potential that youth crew has to offer when it's done by kids who really care about the music. You can feel the energy that these guys put into their music, and I'm sure they tear it up live. Count Me Out is one of the best new "old-school" hardcore bands I've heard, and if every youth crew band sounded like this maybe a third revival wouldn't be so bad. On second thought I think a third revival might be going a bit too far... but this record is pretty damn good. Go! **JB**

**Creep Division (Indecision) CD-** Niiiice! Craig Setari (SOIA, Youth Of Today, Straight Ahead) returns to his 'Craig Ahead' handle with a bunch of the Good Riddance guys. You should be able to guess this one: fast 'n loose early 80's hardcore stylings with some slow hardcore dirges. You can't blame guys for missing the days when hardcore was uncontrolled, obscure and completely dangerous. Song titles include: "Social Pressure", "Snot Nose", "Cut Throat" and so on. Essential for that collection of SOIA affiliates like H20 and Rest In Pieces. Fun for old bastards, but some kids might not get it. **dup**

**Crom "The Cocaine Wars: 1974-1989" (Pessimiser) CD-** This is easily the most bizarre CD I've heard in a long time. The cover artwork has a scantily clad babe with a battle-axe and huge white fur coat. And, get this: she's riding a polar bear, complete with a harness and set of reins. The inside of the sleeve shows three Viking-type guys with swords, leather armor, and mustaches. The music is sort of what you'd expect but not quite. It's lots of thrash metal interspersed with various weird noises ranging from horses galloping, to samples of a guy I think it's the singer saying "the only real type of music is fast hard," to the requisite samples of Arnold in Conan the Barbarian. Oh yeah, the weirdest part is when the music stops long enough for the song "I wanna hear some funky Dixieland" to be played at various speeds... usually very very slow. Okay, you get the idea: someone has far too much money,

far too much free time, and thought there might be an audience for a band like this. Actually, it's almost so terribly bad, it's sort of wonderful. **RS**

**Curl up and Die "The Only Good Bug is a Dead Bug" (Status) CDep-** I got nothin' against Curl Up and Die. They do some very "Converge" rock and roll though. Metal guitar chords/riffs and a pretty speedy and pounding punk beat, complete with breakdowns and math. Curl Up and Die is less relentless than Converge, taking time to ease off the metal. Lyrics are pretty good, but there's even a lot of that 'death' and 'angels' and 'wings' imagery that's so characteristic of you-know-who. So, not a real fresh sound, but some pretty good tunes. Much respect for these guys putting the original version of this album out on their own. **AP**

**Dance Hall Crashers "The Live Record – Witless Banter and 25 Mildly Antagonistic Songs of Love" (Pink & Black) CD-** It's only natural that musical trends should ebb and flow, and I feel a little guilty for kicking a dead horse when it's down (aphorism mixup intended), but in all honesty, when I think "third-wave ska," I think "suburban high schoolers." I'm not saying that Dance Hall Crashers appeal exclusively to the high school crowd, not that would necessarily be a bad thing. Nor am I saying that they're even all that much of a ska band, especially now that they've lost the horns from their lineup. In fact, their music showcases a knack for good songwriting and solid dual-female vocals. But still, I kind of feel that I've outgrown this type of sound. Dance Hall Crashers' punky ska is as good live as it is on their earlier studio CDs, so I have no qualms with the fact that this album was recorded over the course of a live show in Los Angeles, but I don't know if they're really adding all that much to the musical lexicon. **DF**

**Darkest Hour "The Mark of the Judas" (MIA) CD -** You know what the worst thing to hear as an artist is (other than you've got herpes)? "It's all technique." Darkest Hour must have heard this line before (if they haven't, they're probably going to kick my ass). This is technical metal, where the race is to fit as much into a song as possible (riffs, time changes, screamed vocals). And yeah, one can sit back and admire how talented the people are at playing their instrument, but that isn't going to make me spin this again. I want something more; maybe in this instance, I want something that is not perfect; I need a mistake or two for this to feel real. I imagine that there are plenty of people out who would love this CD. There are plenty more, though, that want something other than metal meandering. **JM**

**Death of Marat "The Shattered" (Satellite Transmissions) CD-** Hmmm. This band's singer initially turned me off, but once I got comfortable, things turned out all right. Lots of loud abrasive guitars (though not metal or even hardcore), some great noisy sections, and the occasional appearance of growled back-ups make me happy. This reminds me of the non-emo songs by Boy Sets Fire, though not as fast and less hardcore. I don't know what else to say, this is a great CD that I would recommend to you, the reader. Good reviews don't always have to be the longest



# Track Attack

The LOI Review Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS  
du prosperio: dup  
Jonah Brucker-Cohen: JBC

Dan Frantic: DF  
Jonah Bayer: JB

Jason Murphy: JM  
Adam Parks: AP

ones. JM

**dewey defeats truman "B-Sides, Rarities, and Out-Takes" (Silver Girl) CD-** Unfortunately, this brilliantly named band is not as good as its moniker may imply. dewey defeats truman (that's all lower case letters, F.Y.I.) sounds a lot like Sunny Day Real Estate, albeit without the signature warbly vocals. Very, very "emo," and very middle-of-the-road. Having never heard of ddt prior to tonight, I'm not sure whether or not this album actually consists of b-sides and outtakes, so perhaps their prime a-side material is a little worthier than this. God knows I've heard worse outtakes before, even from some of my favorite bands. But nonetheless, this album is hardly what I would call an essential listen. DF

**Dillinger 4 "Versus God" (Hopeless) CD-** Minneapolis' best and brightest hope to save punk rock is back with a terrific record. If you heard their amazing debut, then you know the deal. There isn't much deviation from D4's tried and true style here, but what we do get are tighter songs, catchier hooks, and even more attitude! Musically D4 could be any pop-punk band. Blazing drum beats meet melodic power chord meets high pitched vocals. The aspect of their music that really sets them apart—other than the fact that they do it better than anyone else—is their ability to really seem like they're having fun when they play without losing any of the bite or harmony. If you've ever seen a D4 show then you know it's always a treat. Whether St. Patty takes off all his clothes and exposes his wiener, or simply the pounding bass drum beats, you know the show will be great. And, unlike many of their contemporaries, D4 manage to sound just as fresh and fun on tape as they do on stage. This is a great record for those looking for something less serious than the new 15 record. D4 will appeal to any type of indie rocker. RS

**Disassociate "Imperfect World" (MIA) CD-** Oh it's nice to see metal acts getting an illustrator to do their cover again. Unfortunately, MIA seems to have folded, but an act like Disassociate have weathered several labels and changing times as well. There is a certain beauty to the music they create, and how they go about doing it. Even if you're not interested in grind-core, they go to admirable extremes. There's a brief explanation of creating "Binaural Beats" in the brain in the liner notes; the singer, Ralphie Boy fronts a wrestling theme rip-off: the WGF-World Grind Federation; and this light-hearted but clearly professional act is always on the road. So what if he obliterates the microphone? There are plenty of variations on their sound, such as loose drum fills, slower metal and hardcore parts and it's not all monotonous like much of the style. The band refers to themselves as a punk band anyhow—much compared to a lot of metal, they are. Song topics include Bill Clinton's promiscuity, Albert Fish, privacy in the modern age. They even cover a Nausea song! This might be as interesting and multi-textured as grind gets. dup

**Disembodied "Heretic" (Edison) CD-** I had always pictured grad students sitting around listening to classical music and discussing existentialism. And here I am, listening to Disembodied in my underwear. It is indeed an odd life. I'm growing less and less a fan of super

heavy metal hardcore, but I will always have a soft spot for Disembodied. This release is no different. Every album gets tighter and tighter, with the vocals as evil as ever and the guitars even crunchier. One thing that I think sets this band apart, though, is the rhythm section. This is anything but a funk band, but the bassist and the drummer get quite the groove going, providing the perfect foundation for the craziness to go off from. If you haven't heard Disembodied, do yourself a favor and pick this up. If anything, it definitely will get rid of that tumor (warning: promise made by me, not the band, though they are probably cool with it). JM

**Downset "Check Your People" (Epitaph) CD-** I have never heard Downset before, and that has never kept me from making fun of them because they are tough guys and their name is derived from a classic football cadence. I apologize, but I always felt justified. But now I also feel proud, proud of Downset for not regurgitating posi-core lyrics from the "Big Book of Hardcore" and daring to reveal a more specific knowledge of specific political situations. Not that the effort is wholly successful, but it's admirable. Unfortunately, there's also a lot of cheesy street slang counteracting pretty banal metaphor which, laid hip-hop-style over a now standard background of "mall-core" makes for a pretty "blah" record. AP

**Drowningman "Rock and Roll Killing Machine" (Revelation) CD-** This is the kind of record that just might keep Rev up there with the big hardcore labels. I mean, how do they expect to survive on Kill Holiday and Garrison discs alone? Well, the only hardcore band I think I've ever heard of that hails from the fine state of Vermont is here to save the day. Apparently this record is around 4 years in the making, as their last full length—released on Hydra Head—was released a long time ago. But this disc is more than worth it. Blazing hardcore that incorporated melody with the perfect amount of aggression and hostility. Drowningman makes no bones about: they are here to kick some ass. Fans of harder Time in Malta—another new Rev signing—will surely dig this. Props for maintaining a very intricate level of musical arrangement while keeping this record firmly embedded in the hardcore tradition. You won't find any of the math-rock heaviness that like-minded bands playing aggressive music today have a predilection towards. This is great. RS

**Earlimart "Filthy Doorways" (Devil in the Woods) CD-** If you can get over your initial feeling of "why the hell did I buy this CD?" after you hear its terrible first song, you'll probably be reasonably impressed by the rest of "Filthy Doorways," which rocks in the same way you would expect a countrified version of the Pixies to rock. You might even hear a bit of atonal Velvet Underground-style tomfoolery if you listen hard enough. As for me, I'm all for that so-called genre of "alt-country," but I don't know how authentic these guys can be, considering they're from smack-dab in the center of L.A. DF

**Earth Crisis "Slither" (Victory) CD-** I'm not going to lie to you: I would list Earth Crisis's "Destroy the Machines" as one of the most influential albums in my life. This album contributed to my being vegan and straight edge for 3.5 years, something I am very proud of.

Not only that, but I can't tell you how many times I have lost my voice screaming the lyrics to "Firestorm" and "All Out War" at an EC show. It is thus with a heavy heart that I have to say that the new Earth Crisis CD is really bad. I can't tell you how bad, but here's a hint: these guys have been listening to a lot of that rap metal crap like Limp Bizkit and Korn. If this isn't bad enough, Karl not only sings (which is pretty rough), but he raps. Ouch. The killer, though, is that this album hints at a lot of the things that make Earth Crisis great: Karl's growl, the topical and confrontational lyrics, and the melodies that somehow appears out of the heaviest sections. This isn't about a band selling out, which I don't think they have; it's about a band that has stumbled and made a bad record. What a sad day. JM

**Ectopia "Sickly Private" CDep-** Oh my. Look what came to me by way of Belgium. No, it's not Front 242. Grindy, AC-to-the-Nth degree shit. Unsane might find their cover art offensive (think about it). I mean, they don't have a singer, but someone on "Anal Regurgitations" on the list of "Fartists". Surprisingly, there's not a lot of bass—no I mean, "4 String Ejaculation" on this record. Grindcore with a lot of treble? 6 songs here, with lots of breaks in the speedy stuff. Pretty predictable, but the horror movie efx are nice. I wonder if I could find someone to seduce with this stuff. dup

**Elliott "False Cathedrals" (Revelation) CD-** Elliott is so much more than an "emo band." Take the first track on "False Cathedrals." It starts out with a pristine choir. In come lush piano chords and the soothing voice of Chris Higdon. Next enters an amazingly tight rhythm section. Add chunky guitars and let simmer. All joking aside—these guys are really pushing the envelope, and are one of the truly innovative bands in this genre. Electronic sounds are used, yet remain in the background and are used tastefully. Not just because they think "Refused are cool." While this album is consistently good from beginning to end, there are occasional moments of lustrous beauty that I wish these guys would more fully develop. In the last issue I predicted that this could be the record of the year, and it isn't. This is a fine record, but these guys have proven they have the potential to make a spectacular one. Elliott is constantly changing and reinventing themselves, and if they stick to their track record their next album should blow your mind. I'm not even going to mention the layout. JB

**The Enkindels "Can't Stop the...." (Initial) CD-** There is a lot of talk about partying here. You know: I want to party with you baby, we're going to party when we come to your town, let's go out tonight and go to a party, etc (these are approximations of course). It's weird, though, 'cause last time I asked singer, Marc Brickley, if he was straight edge, he replied in the affirmative. So, I have to wonder: how do straight edge kids party exactly? Pepsi and beer nuts hardly makes me want to shake my rump? Which brings me to my next point. Specifically, how disappointed I am with this record. Their last full length I found to be a great rock and roll record. That disc combined haughty punk rock attitude with the perfect dose of rock star smugness, all over a sound track of some damn catchy riffage. That record made me want to dance. This one... well, does not. Instead it sounds flat and lifeless, as if the songs were written in a hurry to get them out instead of with a purpose, like to make you want to rock the house. I know the Enkindels broke up shortly after this record was released and at first I was

sad, as they were so much fun. Now I just think I'm glad they broke up before they burdened us with another run-of-the-mill record subsequent to this one. This is a let down from a once very good band. RS

**Ensign "For What It's Worth" (Nitro) CDep-** It appears that longtime old-school revival act Ensign are struggling to find an identity on this EP. Their identity crisis is evident in that the songs on this EP seem to lack any cohesiveness or apparent relationship to each other. The first song sounds suspiciously like former tour-mates Snapcase, while the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tracks are classic Ensign. Unfortunately, these old-school numbers seem a bit forced and formulaic at this point in their career. Track four starts out with an octave guitar part strangely reminiscent of label-owner Bryan (Dexter) Holland's super-group the Offspring, and things spiral downhill from there. Ensign seems to be confused about what direction to take their music, and with good reason. Honestly, how long can a band sing lyrics like, "when I look back on those days..." and take themselves seriously (Those are actual lyrics from this EP, no joke). "For What It's Worth," is a hodge-podge of mediocrity from a once promising hardcore band. Hopefully they can pull themselves together by their next full-length, or join labelmates, Guttermouth, in the bowels of punk rock obscurity. JB

**Eric Mingus "Um... Er... Um" (Some) CD-** Please please please tell me that this CD is not being marketed as 'a sort-of jazz disc by the son of bass extraordinaire, Charles Mingus.' I'm not going to lie to you. I learned to play upright bass in high school listening to "Better Git it in Yer Soul" and "Good Bye Pork Pie Hat" off Mingus Sr.'s similarly titled record, "Mingus Ahem." He was a true genius, and it makes sense that his son would be talented as well. After all, weren't John Lennon, Bob Dylan, John Bonham, Brian Wilson, and Steven Tyler's children fabulously talented as well? Well, no they were not. And, while Mingus Jr. may be a talented bassist in his own right he sure doesn't show it here. Instead, we get some boring, droning, and awkwardly pensive tunes that really do not fit any genre specifically. I have to wonder why Some would be interested in this project. Had the songs been fascinatingly intelligent I might look past the Mingus Sr. thing. Instead, I'll just hold onto his father's recordings and pray that Thelonius Monk's son doesn't make a like-minded mistake. RS

**The Eternals (DeSoto) CD-** Damon Locks has always been serious about music. Since his days as the vocalist for Chicago's groundbreaking Trenchmouth, Locks has been a perfectionist with his songwriting, lyric delivery, and sincere message. Rather than staging another punk assault a la Trenchmouth, the Eternals take a more roots-rock approach where Locks' lyrical delivery plays center stage. His overwhelmingly deep (and at times thunderous) voice controls their sound from the first note. Tracks like "Billions of People" and "The Beginning of the End" exemplify Locks' singing as his poignant lyrics cover everything from moral to corporate oppression. Bassist Wayne Montana (ex-Trenchmouth) and drummer Dan Fliegel fill out the rhythm section while Locks infiltrates the mix with keyboard noodling and sound effects samples. By remaining relaxed without trying



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to force their music out, the Eternals are definitely a force to be reckoned with on the indie circuit. **JBC**

**Eulcid "The Wind Blew All the Fires Out" (Second Nature) CD-** So, this is good. There's energy in the music that is carried by each individual instrument (bass, guitar, drums), and these respective energies coalesce into an end product that conveys a definite passion. Eulcid uses a lot of high-end chords and riffs on the guitar parts, proving that a one-guitar band doesn't have to use bar chords to make rich and powerful music. They've got great dynamics too, and intentionally create opportunities throughout the album for individual instruments to shine. The rhythm of the vocals sometimes detracts from the drive of the songs, not always complimentary to the rhythms at hand, but still a great quality and energy in and of themselves. Second Nature is on a roll. **AP**

**Euphone "Hashin' It Out" (Jade Tree) CD-** When I reviewed Euphone's debut album in 1997, Chicago musician Ryan Rapsys (also of Heroic Doses) was on a minimalist tip. Since then he's recorded the "Breaking Parole" EP and "The Calendar of Unlucky Days" LP and sent his focus spinning towards more rockin' frontiers. Now functioning as a duo with bassist Nick Macri, Euphone's "Hashin' It Out" is a stolid reminder of why I still like this band. Informal jams, moody dynamic shifts, and cat and mouse instrumentation help keep this album interesting. "Shut It" exemplifies this approach as Rapsys' varied percussion instruments run the gamut from glockenspiel to marimba to pots and pans. Although "Hashin' It Out" maintains a louder, rock heavy feel throughout, there are still enough spaces to let the listener catch their breath. As an easy listening album that doesn't let you sing along, Euphone have created yet another winner. **JBC**

**The Explosion "Steal This" (Revelation) CDep-** Complete with old-skool Vans sneakers, tight T-shirts, and spiked belts this band may be more of a fashion statement than anything else. Nonetheless, for all the hype they have received at least part of it is due. For a '77 punk band meets '88 hardcore meets '99 retro this band certainly delivers. Speedy, catchy, and anthemic are all buzz-words that were never better applied to a band of the genre. I hear a lot of sounds in here from The Clash's earliest work to Stiff Little Fingers, and those cannot be bad comparisons no matter what side of the Atlantic you're on. So, take it from me, this is good stuff. Bound to please the latent punk rocker in all of us. However, I have to wonder if 3 releases in the past few months may be a bit much. I also have to wonder how many songs they can write using the same 4 or 5 chord progressions. Where do they go from here? Food for thought. **RS**

**Favez "Gentlemen Start Your Engines" (Doghouse) CD-** I'd compare Favez to the Getup Kids, but quite frankly, Favez are too good to deserve that comparison. On "Gentlemen Start Your Engines," an album that is more glittery guitar pop than it is emo, Favez demonstrate rock-solid songwriting skills and a knack for deceptively simple melodies. This reminds me of college rock back when "college rock" wasn't a bad word - I hear traces of Husker Du,

R.E.M., even the Gin Blossoms, alongside all the usual stylistic nods to bands like the Getup Kids and Piebald. The kids with nerd glasses and band buttons on their satchel bags will eat this up but I could easily see it appealing to a wider audience as well. **DF**

**The Feelings "Jammers and Zac Love Remixes the Feelings" (Coming in Second) CD-** Remix albums are always a mixed affair. There's nothing more frustrating than looking at a single and seeing 6 or 7 different versions of the same song. Some people can pull it off (Aphex Twin comes to mind), and others cannot. This album has the word "remix" in the title, but I haven't heard any of the original material and the songs are all different, so we're starting off on the right foot. The band reminds me of The Wedding Present with beats or the songs where Boyracer plays with electronica. We're talking fine indie pop with some pretty interesting beats and bass lines added to the mix. And while the beats are not going to stand up against Ninja Tune or Mo' Wax's output, they are interesting enough to hold attention and even impress the listener. This is for all the indie rock kids that want to go to raves and clubs but don't have the clothes to get in or the taste for ecstasy. Can the guys in the band dance? Who cares? **JM**

**Fifteen "Hush" (Sub City) 3Song CD-** Ok, I know this is a label that specializes in benefits, but this is it. Fifteen have completely wore out their welcome. Do not send me any more of their music. Music is apparently no longer important to them, or at least so much less crucial that the mind-numbing political issues that NEED to be heaped by the shovelful into the CD packaging. Ferchristsakes, the first track breaks down into "Voices Carry" by 'Til Tuesday. No, I don't especially recall when this band was great, but now they just get on my nerves. Break up and fucking run for office you snivellers. No more, good night. **dup**

**The Figgs "Sucking In Stereo" (Hearbox) CD-** It's nice to hear some finalized new material from the Figgs after their stopgap EP "For EP Lovers Only". For those who aren't aware, The Figgs are a long standing Northeast act that plays pure power pop. High energy, punchy guitar based melodic explosions. Two tracks into this record I'm impressed by the clear and loud production here. Whereas the band took a more solemn route on their last EP, the mood here is set by the tight bursting pop of "Opening Night". It seems safe to say that the departure of guitarist Guy Lyons has made this trio stronger and sharper. A host of Boston music personalities doesn't hurt either. After a career with more ups and downs than an elevator, The Figgs have released a great album that stands up well to their classic "Low-Fi At Society High." Talk about writing your own happy ending. **dup**

**Five Eight "The Good Nurse" (Deep Elm) CD-** It takes until about halfway through Athens band Five Eight's new album for the band to truly show its regional influences, that specific style of folksy, poppy, quirky, punky, utterly unclassifiable psychedelia that seems to exist only in one little corner of Georgia. For the first part of the album, at least, Five Eight have enough of a straightforward rock sound to justify their being signed to Deep Elm (I mean, come on, if there's one label whose very name is synonymous with the word "emo," it's gotta

be Deep Elm). There's nothing wrong with that, incidentally. Even when they're just playing rock songs, Five Eight still rocks pretty hard. But as the album unfolds the band gets a little more comfortable, and soon- whaddaya know? - out come the toy pianos, and the flugelhorn, and the banjos, and the bugles, and the euphoniums. There's even a guest appearance by Scott Spillane of local folk heroes Neutral Milk Hotel. But things never get silly in the way that a lot of Elephant 6 bands are prone to doing; rather, Five Eight stays sad and serious for the most part, and they definitely don't shy away from dumping all the excess instruments and just cranking up their guitars. This may be a real sleeper hit for Deep Elm, or at least it deserves to be. **DF**

**Four Letter Words "Jag-Offs" (Recess) CD-** Track thirteen on this album starts out with someone saying, "Hello, if you are a human, don't buy this record or listen directly to the frequencies on it. Point your ears away." Thanks for the honesty; I just wish they would have stuck this right before the first song. That way I wouldn't have to suffer through the first twelve tracks. Let's sum it up this way, Four Letter Words has flyers in the booklet showing them playing with FYP, so if you like FYP then you will probably like this. I can't decide what it worse about this record, the songs or the production. Perhaps it could be the lyrics about bestiality. Um, yeah that's definitely it. I can think of plenty four letter words to describe this band: crap, suck, and junk all instantly come to mind. Didn't I mention that these guys used to play with FYP? That should have been your cue to stop reading. **JB**

**Forever and a Day "The Art of Creation" (Eulogy) CD-** Alternative rock songs about girls! Eleven photos of beautiful lead-singer Mike Crigher! Benign and uninspired lyrics and song titles!!! A beautiful and scantily-clad woman with a gun! Why waste your time on independent rock when you can get all of these things for free on MTV or anywhere else! It's no coincidence that the acronym for Forever and a Day is FAAD! **AP**

**For The Living "Bridges Burned" (Good Life) CD-** I know I should have totally panned this one, but I can't help it, I have a weakness for new school hardcore bands that lean towards the youth crew end of the pool. I guess it's because this is pretty heavy, but it never gets into the theatrics and technical playing of metal. What you get is some catchy songs, some decent breakdowns, and the choruses that beg for a whole club of kids to sing along. And who can say no to pick slides and "the crew"-style backup singers? My only gripe would be that the lyrics are a little too predictable, but it comes with the territory. Not essential, but worth a circle pit or stage dive or two. **JM**

**F.Y.P. "Come Home Smelly" (Theologian) CD-** Oh, boy I said, another record by these guys that no one else wants to review. It surprised me that this isn't on Recess, but apparently the title track is from one of their previous albums and the other 7 songs are previously unreleased. And no, it's not as snotty as I thought it would be. "Come Home Smelly" is a great song in the Ramones pop style, and they cover "Pure Hate" by Poison Idea to boot. "Shirts & Skins" and "Pink Slipped" are both very good, the latter with some organ. Some of the better songs were produced by Blag Dahlia of the Dwarves. Where did this material come from? Is it better than all the rest of FYP material? I don't know, but ex-pro skater Todd Congelliere pulled off some nice sur-

prises here. **dup**

**FYP "Toys That Kill" (Recess) CD-** I guess if I was a bigger FYP fan, I would be more upset that they were breaking up. All I know about this band is that song with the line "I want to pass notes with you", which isn't necessarily a bad song. Having little to go off of from their ten-year career, I would say that this isn't a bad album to end on. Fun, fast, and snotty punk rock that isn't afraid to experiment with other styles, and they get crazy point for referencing the Misfits ("Braineaters") and covering a Minutemen song ("Paranoid Chant"). I have to admit, though, that the appeal left after the first few songs, when I realized that the CD wasn't going too far from where it started, just around in a little pop-punk circle. This goes into my "Not my thing, but there must be plenty of people out there that would totally like this" pile. **JM**

**Gameface "Always On" (Revelation) CD-** It's Gameface! And it's fortunate for them that Texas is the Reason is no longer a band, because now they can fool high school students into thinking that they have come up with a new and genius brand of emotional rock and roll. Not that these songs aren't good, and not that Gameface doesn't deserve a multitude of fans of varying ages. I'm just saying they're lucky. The only thing that I've heard from them before was that Error Type 11 split. That was grade-A teen drama soundtrack material. This is a beautiful follow up to that. I have to go hold hands now. **AP**

**Garage Fuzz "Turn the Page" (Onefoot) CD-** With a name like "Garage Fuzz" I was expecting the next Guitar Wolf, but instead I got something that sounds a lot more like Samiam plus guitar solos. Musically, this is really good melodic punk rock, complete with solid song structures and a super tight rhythm section. Watch out for the breakdowns on here because they will literally force you to bob your head and tap your foot, resistance is futile. The biggest problem I had with this album is that some bands from overseas (Garage Fuzz...this means you) is that maybe they should take a few more English classes before they try to use the language on their album. Their singer just doesn't pronounce some words very well, and evidently the Guitar Fuzz members aren't spelling bee champions considering they use the word "comfortable" in the lyrics to a song. In all honesty, this is a pretty damn good release and reminds me of early Millincolin material on downers. In a few years I could see these guys taking the post-hardcore community by storm but right now they're more of a drizzle. Don't forget your umbrella. **JB**

**Gene Defcon "Liz" (Lookout!) 7"-** Sometimes I get the feeling that the entire city of Olympia is cooler than you or I will ever be (unless you, dear reader, are from Olympia yourself, in which case I'm the biggest square around). I'm not just talking about all the K Records/Kill Rock Stars crowd. I'm talking about the old grannies who go shopping at K-Mart. I'm talking about the wife-beater wearing trucker types. I mean, hell, a dog's ass would probably be cooler than I was, if it were from Olympia. So anytime I receive a record like this one from Gene Defcon, who bill themselves as "Olympia's #1 Party Band," I can't escape feeling as if perhaps I'm on the



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The LOI Review Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS  
du proserpio: dup  
Jonah Brucker-Cohen: JBC

Dan Frantic: DF  
Jonah Bayer: JB

Jason Murphy: JM  
Adam Parks: AP

butt end of some incredibly funny in-joke.

Gene Defcon probably contains members of Bikini Kill and Mocket and fucking Calvin Johnson, but I'd be damned if I knew who was actually in the band. I mean, I'm only a chump from Scotland. Way less hip.

Still, though, this is undeniably rocking, and goofy enough to take the cooler-than-thou factor of Olympia down a notch or two. Gene Defcon's farfisa-filled tunes are fun little pop gems with goofy lyrics and a choir of females on backing vocals. The music is good, but I can't tell if I'm smirking at them or they're smirking at me. DF

## The Generators "Burning Ambitions"

(Urgent) CD- Just like the last album, this record came my way totally unannounced. Unfortunately, their 1998 "Welcome To The End" is much more powerful and lasting than this. It remains the same spirited, anthemic Clashy streetpunk. Don't get me wrong, this is a good record. It's still fast and brusquely catchy yet the songs on the first album were so fierce and well executed that this album almost seems to be a step backward. These are older guys, with great influences, and it was almost as if they'd been waiting with a lot of fury on the first album. Here, it's an almost obligatory follow-up. Pick up the first album and let's cross our fingers for the third. Guys, don't let me down. dup

## Get High "II" (Aloes International) CD-

Issued from the up and coming Boston school of hardcore expatriates (enlisted members include Daltonic, The World Is My Fuse and Cave In) Get High's second album certainly hit me. Whereas their brand of post-emo rock might not keep every member of the patches & pins crowd captivated, Get High plays a punchy mix of mid tempo punk and edgy rock. There are a few studio effects here and there, but overall the complete package lands quite a few punches whether sounding like the Foo Fighters, Rites Of Spring or a harder Knapsack. The singer, Kev E. Boy has just enough of a rasp in his voice to carry tortured sentiments as well as peaked harmonies with the sparse backups. There's some really beautiful guitar work with an almost dub inflection here, somewhat like Buckethead or Material. A very deep pie indeed. dup

## Give Until Gone "Settled for the Art Official"

(Dim Mak) CD- It's rare these days to hear emo this straightforward. We're talking Braid, Boys Life, and Cursive; whoever signifies emo to you, this is not too far off that sound. And it is music like this that makes me realize why emo got so big in the first place: it's good stuff once in a while. Not everyone can pull off the emotional, yearning vocals and driving indie rock augmented by kids that grew up listening to punk and hardcore with a slow, quiet song or two for effect. It's doesn't always have to be whiny and boring, that's just what happens when a scene blows up and everyone tries their hand at it. Too much exposure can cause anything to get watered down and sketchy. If you don't like emo (now or then), don't buy this. If there is still a part of you that wishes The Promise Ring had only released their first few 7-inches, then this CD is for you. JM

## Glasseater "7 Years Bad Luck" (Eulogy) CD-

This is really great stuff. I have heard a lot about this Florida band in the past few months, espe-

cially from a girl with whom I shared a brief courtship. She told me she liked, among others, bands like Drowningman, Isis, Poison the Well, and this band. So, I assumed they would be metalcore like the rest of the bands on her list. I was quite surprised when I found that this band was not at all metal-sludge or balls-to-the-wall hardcore, but instead very catchy, sometimes emo sometimes crunchy, body-moving punk rock. This band defies a direct comparison, but I hear bits and pieces of a bunch of Florida bands in their sound, such as A Newfound Glory (in the lead vocals), but it's not nearly as commonplace or cheesy as ANFG. The instrumentation sounds like it might be derivative of something, but honestly when looking through my vast and diverse record collection, I couldn't find anything that resembles it enough to make a good comparison. So, you'll just have to trust me that: 1) the music is intense and fun at the same time; 2) this is sure to please every part of the tough hardcore kid, sentimental emo-dork, and early-90s skate punk nostalgia that we all have within us; and, 3) this is one of the best records I've heard in a while. RS

## Gloria Record "A Lull in Traffic" (Crank) CD-

This is a re-release of the first Gloria Record album, but all of the tracks are re-mixed so that the lyrics are worse and you can't hear any of the interesting parts. Oops. What I meant to say was: The production of this record is great, as you would expect from the GR, but the song-writing is not as good as it was on the first album. The music (sappy, melodic, we're-trying-to-make-whining-sound-mature emo) is very repetitive, and the vocals and lyrics just get monotonous after the first couple of tracks. Some of the songs actually sound like maybe the Gloria Record is shooting for some air-time on the WB. If what you want is music by the Gloria Record, then stick to the first album. If what you want is spirit-filled, Christian, emotional rock and roll, then stick to Sunny Day Real Estate. If what you want is cheesy teen-drama background music to score to, then get the Buffy the Vampire Slayer Soundtrack at <http://www.thewb.com/music/buffy.html> AP

## Godspeed You Black Emperor "Lift Your Skinny Fists Like Antennas To Heaven" (Kranky) 2xCD-

How does one even begin reviewing a Godspeed You Black Emperor record? First off, typical review-friendly adjectives such as "generic," and "catchy," are thrown out the window, and one needs to determine whether this band is truly genius- or if they just take themselves too seriously. I find them to be a mixture of both on their latest offering, "Lift Your Skinny Fists Like Antennas to Heaven." Yes, there are elements of genius on this record, specifically the emotions this band is able to evoke by subtly shifting the dynamics of their compositions. There are more than a few moments on this album where every instrument seems to be working together and fighting each other at the same time, resulting in a mesmerizing cacophony which is truly captivating to listen to. However, this album tends to falter with too many overblown sections that are a bit too stagnant and ultimately anticlimactic for my tastes. While these parts are more interesting during their live show where visual images help compensate for the space, even during the recent live performance I witnessed there were often points during their

set where this band seemed to just be holding one note forever with no apparent direction. I have a feeling that most people will praise this record based solely on of the hype surrounding this band, and don't get me wrong- it certainly deserves praise. I just think that the possibilities for what this band can accomplish are so grandiose; I was expecting a bit more from something as epic as a double album. JB

## Gods Reflex "Scenes From a Motel Seduction" (Johanns Face) CD-

Gods Reflex is, simply put, the best emo band you've never heard of. Even though they've been around just as long as those hacks in Mineral or the Promise Ring-- and their music actually is emotional in a real way, not a forced way-- Gods Reflex has remained virtually anonymous for the past years of their genre's explosion. My God, I think we received their first disc damn near the beginning of this very zine you hold in your hands. And, unlike many of its lesser counterparts, I still have it and even dig it out every so often to make myself remember a time when emo wasn't so commercial and wasn't so trendy. That song "The Summer in Between" remains one of the best emo songs ever written, and judging by Gods Reflex's newest stuff, I'm sure it will stay that way. That's not to say that this record is bad, 'cause it's not. In fact it's very good, and I think I would have flipped out over this CD about 4 or 5 years ago. Now, however, I get the distinct feeling of been-there done-that. While the recording here is quite polished and the guitars are just as bright and shiny as ever, Gods Reflex really hasn't progressed since their last LP. And, I find the songs on the last record to be much more imaginative and dreamy. Here, the songs are still very good, they're just a bit... well, tired. I mean, how many more boy-loves-girl-and-gets-his-heart-broken songs do we need. Sorry guys: you put out a great record, just about 4 years too late. RS

## Gomorra (Rhetoric) CD-

I will never listen to this CD again, but my two listens through were not without some pleasure. What we got here is totally crazy schizophrenic grindcore, where one minute everything is sludge and the next everything is running a million miles a minute. Granted, I greatly dislike metal guitar solos, and the low and high pitched singers going back and forth seems a little trite, but this isn't rocket science, is it? Good for what it is: totally dispensable grindcore that I am sure a few readers might get into. JM

## The Go-Nuts "Dunk and Cover!" (Lookout!)

CD- Well, you certainly can't accuse the Go-Nuts of not having fun with what they do. We're talking, after all, about the world's one and only self-proclaimed "Snak Rock" band, a group of costumed and proudly overweight superheroes accompanied by a coterie of dancing banana-loving gorillas, armed with a fearsome food-shooting snack cannon, and dedicated to the propagation of donuts, chips, and sweets and the destruction of health-food loving villains the world over. If you haven't seen the Go-Nuts live before, it's most likely because they're banned from every venue in your town, due to the fact that their shows inevitably end up culminating in a gigantic food-fight from which only the most bland and uncool members of the audience emerge unscathed. I can still taste the food on the shirt I wore the last time I saw the Go-Nuts, and I think that was in 1997. "Dunk and Cover," the band's latest full-length offering, features one of those nifty "action covers" that shifts between

two images as you move it - in this case, images of the band, bedecked in costumes that, strangely enough, evoke Germany circa World War I, firing glazed donuts from their cannon. There are song titles on the album like "Let's Bring) Cheese to China," "Jelly Filled Heart," and "Hot for Twinkies," which is a Van Halen cover, sort of. And as for the music... oh, c'mon, it's not about the music. You should know that by now. DF

## The Good Life "Novena on a Nocturn"

(Better Looking) CD- What's up with all the indie rock ex-members putting out new CD's this issue? In the last week, I've heard Chris Broach's (ex-Braid) Firebird Band, ex-members of Jeju's new project Lovelight Shine, and now Tim Kasher's The Good Life-- the second record I've reviewed this issue from an ex-member of Cursive. And while I've enjoyed all of the records listed above, I must admit, the Good Life is my current favorite, all ex-member credibility aside. If I had to classify the Good Life, they aren't too far off from Cursive, but I found this record to be much more listenable than any Cursive releases. Could it be the way Tim Kasher effortlessly mixes organic sounds like cello with Yamaha drum machines? Or maybe it's the introspective lyrics that even the biggest tough guy can't help but relate to? It could even be the songwriting, which is light years beyond most records being released nowadays. Chances are, it's a combination of all of these factors, but even if I can't pinpoint the exact charm of this record, one thing is for certain--this is one of my favorite records of the issue. If you're one of those weirdoes who like to feel melancholy in that "Belle & Sebastian" sort of way, you need this record. JB

## Government Issue "Complete History Vol. 1" (Dr. Strange) CDx2-

Man, talk about a wake-up call. There probably isn't a classic US punk/hardcore act that gets overlooked as much as these guys. They were massively prolific back when, and grew out of the DC straight-edge scene with people like Rollins and Minor Threat. And, I'm sorry to say that this is the first record of theirs that I've truly digested. Apparently the famed Dr. is releasing (almost) everything with amazing collector-style liner notes featuring John Stabb's commentary as well. This 2-disc set includes 5 LPs (including a live album with 2 interviews), 2 EPs, and a handful of out-takes and bonuses. And it's only Vol. 1!! Great way to illustrate evolution of an act that clearly influenced many as they moved out of the initial hardcore format. The drama that these guys folded into the mix formed the bedrock for 90s hardcore and emo. Important material to say the least. dup

## Grade "The Embarrassing Beginning"

(Victory) CD- I would like to start out this review by explaining that I really admire Grade, and they have been one of my favorite bands since their epic EP, "Separate the Magnets." I would also like to add that even though it got mixed reviews, I felt that their Victory Records debut, "Under the Radar" was one of the best records of '99. That said- there is no good reason for this album to be released. Before you get your thick-rimmed glasses fogged up, allow me to elaborate. The first eight songs here are off the longtime out-of-print Grade/ Believe split CD on Workshop Records. Fine, it would make sense for this stuff to be released



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again if it hadn't just been re-released by Workshop last year! Honestly, anyone who is a big enough Grade fan to buy this either has the original (like me) or picked up the re-release when it came out. The remainder of this CD contains the "Triumph and Tragedy" single (which I'm sure will thrill those who paid seven dollars for two songs which were later released on Under the Radar, and a Van Halen cover) and a radio-edit of "A Year in the Past." This album starts to redeem itself with the acoustic versions of newer material and demos, but even I must admit that this stuff really isn't strong enough to warrant release at this point in Grade's career. Basically, what you have here are eleven songs that are already easily accessible and four alternate versions that are by no means necessary to anyone's collection. This seems like the type of album a band rushes to release due to contractual agreements, so either Grade is rushing to get out of their contract or they are just trying to tide fans over until their next release. Bottom line- if you're a hardcore Grade fan you already have most of this stuff, and if you've just been turned on to these Canadian rockers do yourself a favor and buy "Separate the Magnets." It's half the price, and doesn't have any excess filler. **JB**

**Grotto "Get A Hustle" (Modern Radio) CD-** What's the difference between whiny and annoying? The vocalist doesn't know or care here and we're all worse for the wear. Someone had a good laugh because his vocals are really low in the mix and the guitar really high. Midpaced punk that pull no punches, lands no aircraft nor wakes me from my slumber. *Gesundheit.* **dup**

**Hacksaw (SpectraSonicSound) CD-** This reminds me of early 90's grunge, and not in a good way. I'm not joking, we're talking Candlebox, Alice in Chains, and flannel. Granted, the band is not as bad as Candlebox, but it does have some bad aggressive lyrics and some horrible sludgy guitars. I will admit that there are times when the guitarist stops playing quasi-metal riffs and I do find myself bobbin my head, but those moments are few and far between. Check out this line: "If I see you comin' round here one more time/I'm gonna crush yr head like a grape/And drink the wine". C'mon, how lame can you get? These guys could get airtime on those stations that play classic rock and "alternative" rock, which is fine with me, because I never listen to them. Stay away from this one (unless you are stuck in 1994). **JM**

**Half Visconte (Decimal Cinque) CD-** Ah, this is the diamond in the rough that I was hoping for, the CD in the pile of reviews that makes it all worth it. I have no idea who this band is, but I aim to find out. There are four tracks on this CD; the first three are tasty slabs of indie rock that find themselves in Tristeza and Mogwai territories. It's the fourth track, however, that makes this thing worthwhile. We are talking a 24-minute long track that reminds me of a boat ride. You just keep hitting wave after wave of noise, with small lulls in-between to make everything seems all right. Few vocals, no real song; just craziness for 24 minutes. And I do love hand-printed limited edition packaging, as I totally am collector scum. Sign me up for this band's mailing list, I don't want to miss the next release. **JM**

**Hey Mercedes (Polyvinyl) Cdep-** Often times when we review projects of ex-members of what have you, those ex-members of successful defunct bands complain that we compare their new bands to those of the past. With outfits like Jets to Brazil the comparisons may not be fair as that particular band has a completely different sound than those ex-members previous projects. However, with the ex-members of bands like Kid Dynamite or Burning Airlines the new bands may only have a few ex-members, but the new projects remain with virtually the same exact sound as the previous one. Something very similar can be said of Hey Mercedes. This band, as I'm sure you all know by now, is made up for 3/4 of the now defunct Braid. When 3 out of 4 members of a band regroup and form a new band—with one new member—it's not really a new band, it's basically just a new name for an old band. Nonetheless, I'll be the first one to sing the praises of Braid as I will loudly proclaim Hey Mercedes a perfect segue into the annals of indie rock stardom. Here we see a more polished—maybe even better produced—Braid in full action bringing us 4 songs that make me hop up and down mad with glee at the prospect of a new full length. For all those who found "Frame and Canvas" to be an absolutely spectacular record, do not be disappointed as Hey Mercedes simply does not disappoint. **RS**

**The Hidden Chord "Eight Blue Eyes" (Blood of the Young/ Heart of a Champion) CD-** I think the hidden chord in this band's music is flat. The Hidden Chord are so garagey they sound like someone backed up a V6 Twin-Cam 4x4 right over them. Noise-laden production envelops this CD so much that it's difficult to tell one song from the next. If you do notice the difference you might find yourself hastily mouthing along to tracks like "Morse Code" and "All Economy Day", where guitarist/ vocalists Brian Severns and Knol Tate sing such inspiring lines as "Say it now for you to hear/ Feel it now for me to fear". Gimme a break guys, this stuff sounds like a thrown-out script from a Dawson's Creek Halloween Special. **JBC**

**Hollowed Out (Magister Ludi) CDep-** Magister Ludi has yet to let me down, and this release is no different. This EP sounds like it was recorded through a sock, which I feel is essential for hardcore/punk bands this insane. The muddy production turns everything into one big chaotic ball that you can't help but marvel at. Hollowed Out play hardcore that has both metal and punk influence, as well as a singer that growls with the best of them. This will not change the world, but the image of this band playing shows in their friends' basements and VFW halls is somewhat consoling to a jaded guy like me. Send me more of the same, Magister Ludi, the neighbors aren't nearly pissed off. **JM**

**The Holy Childhood "Up With What I'm Down With" (Gern Blandsten) CD-** According to the Holy Childhood's liner notes, the band has 18 members, although I'm not entirely sure what 14 or 15 of them are playing, because it's hardly as if all their songs are filled with flugelhorn and glockenspiels and such. In fact, the Holy Childhood is carried almost entirely by singer Danny Leo (a relative of Chisel's Chris Leo, who also appears on the album). Danny, put simply, has a wonderful voice. He attempts impassioned vocal leaps from bass to falsetto successfully and sings with a kind of Dylan-

esque ease; it's not quite on key, but boy does it sound good. His songs, which are primarily structured around acoustic guitar and then layered with everything from horns to gospel singers (maybe that's what those other 14 folks are for!) have a countryish feel without being twangy. I'm reminded at times of the Grifters, and coming from me that's a big compliment. This is excellent stuff. **DF**

**Homeless Wonders (Suburban Home) CD-** I was going to guess that these guys were real into the Descendents, but then I saw the label name, and now I don't have to guess. These guys listen to lots of Descendents. They're basically just a pop-punk band with some incidental emo parts. They're not singing much about the ladies, which I guess is to their benefit. They have some interesting stops and goes, and seem alright at their respective instruments. A few good ideas, but pretty non-cohesive and unsure overall. I'm guessing another year will have these guys getting their act together. Look for them again sometime. **AP**

**The Honor System "Single File" (Asian Man) CD-** Huh, I thought Asian Man only put out ska discs, my mistake. This is great melodic punk rock that has more angst than snarl; it's not emo, but the lead singer could probably front a decent emo band. Another thing that sets this band apart is the lack of self-deprecating humor or flat-out sarcasm; the lyrics are well thought out and usually pretty interesting. The fact that most of it is mid-range rock makes the moments when they really pick up speed or cut loose that much more exciting. Forget picking this up for your little brother or sister just getting into punk rock, pick this one up for yourself and remember what it is about this music that still makes you glad to be called a punk from time to time. **JM**

**The Hope Conspiracy "Cold Blue" (Equal Vision) CD-** First off, I have yet to see CD artwork designed by Jake Bannon that does not look amazing. Secondly, after giving this CD about 10 listens I have some thoughts on the mental health of all of us that have attempted to play music of the hardcore genre. What is it with these singers that don't quite scream and they don't quite sing, rather an amalgamation of the two? Like the back up vocals of an Ashes or Still-life song, the singer sounds depraved as if life is the most unbearable thing ever thought up. But, from the little bit of cognitive psychology I know, when life gets so bad that all you want to do is scream and scream and then rock back and forth in a fetal position in the corner-- as I imagine the singer of this band does after every show-- it is really hard to get up and start a band or play a show. If one is that upset they probably wouldn't pick up a guitar, instead they'd slit their wrists and call it quits. This leads me to two conclusions: 1) the pain felt here is fake; or, 2) this band is trying to mix typical east coast hardcore with the stuff coming out of San Diego. I'm going to go with the latter even though the instrumentation sounds nothing like Swing Kids. Rather, I hear athe Harvest vibe in effect here, which is no wonder since this band has members of Harvest in it. Pretty good. Nothing to write home about, but I could see this band becoming awesome in the future. **RS**

**Hot Rod Circuit "If It's Cool With You, It's Cool With Me" (Triple Crown) CD-** Along with the new Glassjaw disc and the second Sarge record this CD has been in constant rotation in my stereo for the past two weeks. That's not to

say it's a masterpiece—as some may accuse the other two discs in my stereo of being. Instead, I felt I owed this band something. I was impressed by their first record, which couldn't be more than a year old by now, and I interviewed them in my last issue, so I thought that I should give this release a really thorough analysis. Had the album knocked my socks off from the get-go, I probably would have listened to it a few times, written the review, then thrown it in the back of my huge pile of CDs to eventually be resigned to the back of one of five one-hundred disc CD books I have, and probably never listened to again—like that first Elliott CD, which was so good upon first listen, but faded from my radar pretty quick. This CD is good. Probably the best some bands could ever hope for. But, you know what? The more I listen to this CD the more I realize that it's really really good. And, the songs are uniformly catchy and energetic (with the exception of the third song, on which the verses are so prosaic it almost hurts to listen to them) and the production is great. If I were to take this CD alone, without having heard any of their other stuff, I probably think it really good in that Getup Kiddy meets the better moments of The Jazz June way. As I have mentioned *ad nauseum*, I really like the HRC's songs—some of them will stay in your head forever!—this might as well be their previous record as the style has changed little and the songs are pretty similar as well. But what my grandpappy, Hank, always used to tell me was "Sonny, if it ain't broke, don't fix it." **RS**

**Hot Water Music "Never Ender" (No Idea) CD-** I'd like to start out by saying that I have mixed feelings about the latest offering from the best thing to come out of Gainesville... ever. Music-wise I feel confident in stating that this is the best CD reviewed in this issue, hands down. How do I know this? Because I've already heard every song on this CD, and worn out the tapes they're recorded on. This conveniently brings me to my problem with this album. I am no vinyl elitist, but honestly the fact that Hot Water Music's last 12 or so vinyl offerings—which I have spent a significant amount of money on in the last few years—are now released on one CD, is kind of disheartening. Especially since this isn't the first time this has happened. What other band simultaneously releases a CD version of every seven-inch that comes out? I don't see the point. Anyway, what you have here is a collection of their splits with Clairmel and Tomorrow, as well as the "You Can't Take the Boy Out of Branderton" seven-inch, the Japanese split with Pack Rat, the Alaucha seven-inch, and their version of "The Bitter End," from the Six Going on Seven split (which may I add is far superior to the version on No Division). A lot of this material was released before "No division" which in my opinion is the "golden era" of Hot Water Music, if there ever was one. Even their earliest recordings from the "Push for Coin" demo, stand the test of time, and prove once again that Jason Black and George Rebello are by far the finest rhythm section in the entire punk genre. Truthfully, there is really nothing I would change about this CD (aside from it not coming out), except that I would have also included their version of "Where We Belong" from the Florida 403 comp- but that's really splitting hairs. I only received a promo of this CD, but I recently saw the real version, which has some of the best



# Track Attack

The LOI Review Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS      Dan Frantic: DF  
du prosperio: dup      Jonah Bayer: JB  
Jonah Brucker-Cohen: JBC

Jason Murphy: JM  
Adam Parks: AP

packaging No Idea and Scott Sinclair have pulled off yet. Couple that with a bonus CD of demos when you order it directly from No Idea, and you have my extensive Hot Water Music vinyl collection on one magnificent CD. You're Welcome. JB

**The Icarus Line "Kill Cupid With a Nail File" (Buddyhead) 7"-** *Skyscraper* has done it. *No Idea* has done it. *Punk Planet* has done it (sort of). Hell, even *Law of Inertia* has done it. So it's understandable that sooner or later *Buddyhead*, which along with *Rocket Fuel* is one of the nation's premier online zines, would choose to release a record of their own, thus further blurring the line between "magazines" and "record labels." The difference is that, as opposed to the sometimes-good-and-sometimes-questionable releases of the aforementioned zine-labels, this 7" is excellent. The Icarus Line sound a bit like early (and we're talking early!) At the Drive-In, although they also appear to have been brushing up on their San Diego math-rock as well. Altogether they're passionate and rocking, and they're as good a candidate as any to resuscitate the flagging "screamo" genre. My only complaint is that this 7" is one-sided and therefore contains only one song, but the beautiful design of the record itself (the band name and song title are embedded into pink vinyl) more than compensates for that. A quality release from a quality zine. DF

**I Hate Myself (No Idea) 7"-** The vocals on this record had me playing with the pitch nob like crazy. The music sounds right, but the lead singer sounds all fast and high, making one wonder about Alvin and the Chipmunks fronting an emo/hardcore band. No matter, it's a great single once you get used to the singer. Nice jangly emo that suddenly explodes into thunderous hardcore; if Alvin ditched his brothers for early Grade, this would be the band. And who has two thumbs and likes cream soda-colored vinyl? This guy! The only downer is that this is the last thing by the band. Maybe Earth Crisis wants to take their vocals in another direction, someone should hand them the lead singer's number. JM

**Imbroco "Are You My Lionkiller?" (Deep Elm) CDep-** Ok, this package includes members of Pop Unknown and Mineral, so if you're impressed already read on. Driving yet careful guitar work matched with strong vocal harmonies of two light, soft singers. The first song starts really quiet then launches into rock that I wasn't expecting from the get-go. Elliptically, it then returns to the mellow part where it started. Nothing special in concept, but the execution is so gingerly handled that the end product is worth investigating. The second track features softer vocals gracing a pedal heavy guitar study. By the third track, the rock is back. Are they teasing me? This release is only 6 songs but it's got considerable depth. Check it out. AP

**The Impossibles "Return" (Fueled By Ramen) CD-** When the Impossibles anthology came out a year or two ago, it received a rather scathing review from yours truly. Not that it was all that bad, but it was pretty aggressively mediocre, and besides, I was a little taken aback that a band I had never even heard of before apparently was big enough to merit a full anthology. No matter, I wrote the review, shelved the CD,

and closed the book on the Impossibles. But now they're back, with the appropriately titled "Return," and I'm surprised – pleasantly – by how much they've improved. Gone is the faux-ska of old – it has been replaced by juicy power pop very much in the vein of Weezer or the Stereo. There are a couple songs here that aren't up to par (the singer's attempted vocal acrobatics on "Gone 4 Good" are rather cringeworthy), but on the whole this is a solid album, smartly produced and very ebullient, with plenty of 'whoa ohs' for the kids. DF

**Ink and Dagger (Buddyhead) CD-** One mistake that I have to admit making over the last few years is almost completely ignoring this band. When "The Fine Art..." record came out, I spent very little time listening to it, even though a friend of mine heralded it as a masterpiece. What I did know of that album, I admired. I have only listened to this new CD four times, and it seems certain that I should understand it more intimately if I am to accurately review it. What I have learned from four listens is this: this album rocks. It's slow and heavy and huge. Ink and Dagger has managed to base an album on rock guitar without skipping on the drums, while at the same time achieving an admirable blend of convention, novelty, and innovation. A dark, eerie, and ominous overtone rides through the record, characteristic of this band's past releases. One thing that makes listening to this record even more intense is the recent death of singer Sean McCabe. Whether this recording comes across as the voice and words of someone passed, or as a self-written eulogy, the power and emotion of this music emanates incalculably in light of Sean's death. Ink and Dagger was a band that pushed music, that pushed their listeners, and that carved a place for themselves in indie-rock which only they could fill. This appropriately self-titled CD may or may not capture the essence of Ink and Dagger, but it is an undeniably powerful piece, and a provocative farewell from a band that deserves to be remembered. AP

**Isis "Celestial" (Escape Artist) CD-** Man, Escape Artist goes all out with the releases. Everything from the production to packaging is fucking incredible with this label. Do we have another Hydra Head on our hands? Quite possibly, for the two labels release very similar music. Artsy, experimental, and motherfucking pummeling. And, if they are trying to do the Hydra Head thing, signing Aaron Turner's Isis is a step in the right direction. It can be argued very astutely that Neurosis is coming back in fashion. It can also be argued that Neurosis' brand of sludge-core is becoming cool with kids who normally don't like metal. Judging from the Isis show I saw in Berkeley over the summer I'd have to agree. All the sweater wearing kids are starting to find that no emo is not the most innovative form of music out there. Isis is onto something with this release, something big. I'm not quite sure if it's their amazing grooves – that suck you in and leave you begging for more – that make this band so appealing, or simply a level of aggression that falls squarely within the metal realm but does not sound anything like Slayer. All fans of hard music will like this. Recommended. RS

**Isobella "Akasha" (Claire) CD-** A lot of copies of this record passed through my hands while I was working mailorder at Darla Records this last summer, although at the time I didn't have

an opportunity to listen to it. Now that the opportunity has arisen, I can't say I'm terribly impressed. Isobella has the dreamy, new-romantic chamber pop thing down pretty well, but there's something intangible missing from their music that prevents it from achieving the immortal sound of, say, the Cocteau Twins. Perhaps it's that the vocals are mixed so softly that they sound as if they're being sung from the bottom of a well, but this album shimmers and sparkles plenty without ever really being able to dazzle. Still, it's dreamy and deep, and the shoegazer kids should love it. DF

**Isotope 217 "Who Stole the I Walkman?" (Thrill Jockey) CD-** At its best, the fusion-tinged nu-jazz of this Chicago-based group offers a glimpse into what Miles Davis might sound like were he around today. Elsewhere, however, Isotope 217's electronic noodlings lose any sense of real cohesion and fall into that dreaded category of "interesting but not actually very good." Calling Isotope 217 jazz for the 21st century would be giving them too much credit, but writing them off as untalented would be foolish; many of the songs here contain bits and pieces of inspired brilliance. Somewhere in-between Tortoise (which should come as no surprise) and "Music is Rotted" era Squarepusher. DF

**The Ivory Coast "The Rush of Oncoming Traffic" (Big Wheel) CD-** This is a poor release based on the usually high standards of Big Wheel Recreation Records. Not only do The Ivory Coast bite off way more than they can chew by trying to incorporate weird studio effects into their recording – that usually come off as nothing more than audio masturbation than anything that fail to please the ear or adds to the song-structures – but they are stuck playing a style of music done far better about 5 years ago. You know, not quite as whiny as Mineral, not quite as catchy as Jejuné. Actually, I think these guys would do well from a listen of the Edaline CD *Law of Inertia*. Record put out a few years ago, as Edaline have mastered a style the Ivory Coast hope for... and that was over 2 years ago. DF

**Janis Figure "Damage Control" (Owned and Operated) CD-** Boy if you could only see the picture of Janis Figure on the back of this CD. They look like a Robert Smith look-alike contest minus the makeup. What's this trend with bar rock groups basing their entire repertoire on a bunch of recycled guitar riffs. I guess when a band has songs called "007666" and "I Can't Control Myself" you know someone is trying really hard to impress the greased up euro-trash crowd. "Shiny Shoes" is the most imaginative they get, especially when singer Billy Bisson says the line "Shiny shoes/ Don't mean nothing on a Monday/ Shiny shoes/ Save them 'til Sunday". What is that supposed to mean? Either Bisson is writing his lyrics in church, or we're supposed to believe he's a gifted songwriter. Had me fooled. JBC

**Jazz June "The Medicine" (Initial) CD-** Noisy and thick 'jazzy' emo-rock under the standard vocal pop-emo vocal wall. What's neat is that it's a lot more engaging than most of the rest of the pack. Perhaps they manage to concentrate the dramatics of the style into much more dense songs, or maybe it merely distracts me from the vocal harmonies. Either way, this is more memorable than their last album and a worthwhile listen for fans of the style. Try the Jazz June if you're looking for something 'mathier' than The Get Up Kids or Piebald. dup

**J Church "One Mississippi" (Honest Don's) CD-** J Church has a very special place in my heart. They were never my favorite band growing up in San Francisco, but I always jumped at the chance to run down to the Mission District and see Lance and whoever was backing him up on that particular day. Sure the J Church have never played the most polished pop punk around. Sure, they aren't good looking in the typical rockstar type way. Sure, a lot of their songs sound the same, but they were always there when you needed them. Playing honest, unpretentious, crude pop-punk the way it was meant to be played – and keep in mind they were doing it before anyone – J Church has a way of always providing the perfect soundtrack to any occasion. This record, their 5th if memory serves, has some tunes that are right up there with the best ever written by Lance's famous song-a-week writing style. It tends to drag around the middle, so much so that I can't help wonder if the 26 tunes here may be a bit much. But, give them some credit man! They practically invented a style of punk that has been copied by everyone from Discount to the Getup Kids. It has been said that Lance should throw in the towel and stop doing what he loves in punk rock, but then again, part of the appeal is that just when you think the J Church are down for the count, they get right back up and hit you with a song like "Rich and Young and Dumb." I hope to have many more trips down to the Mission District. RS

**Jejuné "R.I.P." (Big Wheel Recreation) CD-** The deal with this CD is: Jejuné is no longer. This is all you get. Tracks one through five are unreleased new stuff, and six through twelve are re-releases. Tracks one, three, four, and five all go together nicely, as they are four laid-back ballad type pieces. If you've liked Jejuné in the past, you could very well love these. They take a new (but not surprising) step away from the last album, becoming more mature and less rock and roll. Enter track two. This song seems to claim "We still know how to have a rockin' good time". Track two, 'New State', is a pop masterpiece, upbeat, sing-along-able, wicked breakdowns, a guitar solo, and a keyboard part to blow the Get Up Kids out of the water. This is overall a good CD, and a must hear for fans of Jejuné. AP

**Jebediah "Of Someday Shambles" (Big Wheel) CD-** Hmmm, is the revolving hype over this label fading of late? Jebediah is an Australian act that plays a loud and snotty modern style of post-pop-punk (if that makes sense). That means it's deliberate and well played at first and then the tempo changes to give the vocalist the opportunity to open up his nasally wail to full bore. It's certainly not bad, especially if you can take the vocals with that upper-lip sneer. But the attempted back-ups don't help and the only thing you walk away with is a whole lot of treble – his voice, guitar points, snare, cymbal. Even with the spoonful of sugar it's kinda tough getting this medicine down, and I have a sore throat already. dup

**Jebediah/Jimmy Eat World (Big Wheel) CD-** You have to wonder what point Big Wheel is trying to get across through the ramblings in the press sheet for this release. Not only do they let us know that the number one selling point of this record is that Jimmy Eat World



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has sold over 50,000 copies of their last record to date, but that little-known (in the States) Jebediah's past two records have gone "double platinum" in Australia where they're from. Are they trying to impress us indie rockers to make us think that since they sell a lot of records they must be good as the masses couldn't be wrong? Or, could they be trying to cover up the fact that Jimmy Eat World is a pretty legit band-- and a good one at that-- even though their last record is by most mainstream accounts a flop and that Jebediah really aren't that good? I have to wonder: if there is a big emo scene in Australia, and if so, how a third-rate band like this got to the top of the heap? I would rather listen to INXS, Silver Chair, or AC/DC over this any day. You can keep your bad indie rock Australia. And as for Jimmy Eat World's unshocking appearance here, well, sales figures never much impressed me anyway. **RS**

**Jimmy Eat World "Singles" (Big Wheel) CD-** Generally I tend to be a bit wary of compilations of b-sides and singles. Usually there is a reason why these songs haven't been included anywhere else and they tend to be mostly throwaways with scattered gems here and there. I am happy to report that while not every track on this album is stellar, a majority of them are just as good as JEW's last full-length "Clarity." Sure there are no "Lucky Denver Mint's" on here and I doubt any of these songs will land a spot on a Drew Barrymore movie soundtrack, but these singles do demonstrate the more raw and less produced side of Jimmy Eat World which they traded for the slickness of their major label releases. There is something refreshing about listening to this band let loose and rock out, and while they bring it down on a full numbers this disc is full of energy and raw emotion. I haven't heard much from the JEW camp since they got dropped from Capitol but this album renews my confidence in their songwriting and I am expecting a triumphant return. Rock on. **JB**

**J Majesty (Some) CD-** I'm going to be honest, this sounds like a second-rate Promise Ring fronted by the lead singer of the Spin Doctors. Yeah, that sounds pretty bad, doesn't it? It's not unlistenable, it's just that I can't help thinking of the Spin Doctors, and that just isn't a good thing. The band can write some pretty songs, but none of them have that extra thing to keep me coming back. I do, however, find the CD's layout quite nice. Pass. **JM**

**Joan Of Arc "The Gap" (Jade Tree) CD-** Always finding their material too full of punched-in distractions, it surprised me that the first thing on this record was merely quiet acoustic guitar and vocals. Then again, they mention that one of the elements of this album is a certain use of Pro Tools audio software. So you have that rawness, with the heavy editing (a lot of creative cuts and layering) which together create a loose feel to these ten songs. Of course, nothing about a Joan Of Arc record is actually going to be simple, but I digress. Their song titles are pretty amusing, but I guess that's par for the course. Pretty approachable, which is saying a lot. **dup**

**Junction 18 "This Vicious Cycle" (Fearless) CD-** Fearless is an interesting label. Other than the At the Drive-in stuff they released I don't think I've been really into any of their records.

They're all at a much higher-than-average quality level, but the west coast punk thing really isn't for me anymore. One thing I've noticed in my consistently amicable relationship with the label is that they love to make comparisons for their bands (e.g. they said the Lonely Kings sounded like Jawbreaker while they claimed At the Drive-in was reminiscent of Fugazi meets Avail). There is nothing at all wrong with comparisons, and sometimes they are an essential way to describe a band that may not have a huge audience yet. However, I have to wonder if their comparisons are always the most right-on. For instance, the press sheet for this record compares the band to Saves the Day or the Smoking Popes. And, while the music isn't half bad, it does not sound anything like Saves the Day or the Smoking Popes. Junction 18's singer has a good voice but it is more similar to the San Francisco band Crumb than the high-pitched bubblegum voice of Chris from Saves the Day. Plus, the singer for the Smoking Popes sounded more like Morrissey than anything in punk rock. So, Fearless has to ask themselves: do our bands actually sound like who we think they sound like, or are they merely good bands that might be able to stand on their own for a change? **RS**

**Keepsake "She Hums Like a Radio" (Eulogy) CD-** This band is confused. Or at least confusing. While listening to "She Hums Like a Radio" I thought of the Juliana Theory, Poison the Well, Falling Forward, and Weezer. These are good bands (minus J.T.) so your initial reaction might be "yay, cool," but it's not cool really. This is basically just another poppy emo record, well recorded but not that tight, but for some reason there are screamy vocals once in a while. They don't make sense, they don't fit, but they're there. The lyrics on this CD are horrendous and the music is regurgitated. Spend money and time elsewhere. **AP**

**Kill Creek "Long Story Short" (Second Nature) CD-** Lord knows I'm a big Replacements fan. I mean, c'mon, my freaking column for this very magazine you hold in your hands was named after a song on "Let it Be." I love Minor Threat as well, but you don't see me naming my column "Out of Step." You get my point. Anyways, the genius of the Replacements was that they could style jump while still sounding original and still maintaining a distinct Replacements sound. There was punk, new wave, rockabilly, country, even lounge core all pulled off in crude imperfect execution-- which was exactly what made it perfect stuff to listen to and enjoy. So, here we have Kill Creek, a band that did the major label thing to little success and found themselves releasing this collection on Second Nature and my first thought is wouldn't Paul Westerberg be proud. While these kids aren't as versatile-- or as innocently unjaded-- as the Replacements were they manage to convey a very similar feeling that the Mats softer stuff did. This band could easily fit along side a sentimental emo band, but wouldn't be out of place at a more melodic hardcore show. I could see this band doing great things in the future. I just hope people are smart enough to not only remember the past, but also realize that melancholy guitar rock like this beats the hell out of the Getup Kids any day of the week. Impressive. **RS**

**Koufax "It Had to Do With Love" (Heroes & Villains) CD-** I usually eat Moog-filled synth-

pop up like candy, but this album from the Getup Kids' prodigal sons, Koufax, strikes me as being really soulless. Sure, the melodies are pleasant enough in a Rentals sort of way, and there are a couple of nice keyboard hooks and crunchy power chords. But that's where this album's strong points trail off. The vocals are sub-par, the synthesized piano sound isn't quite fitting with the guitars, and there's a nagging feeling of sameness to all the songs despite their apparent chirpiness. It's been said that angst makes the best music, and in this case I'm inclined to agree; perhaps a bit of Getup Kids-style moaning would do these guys well. There are a couple of standouts here, like the inaptly named "Minor Chords," but overall Koufax sounds like a watered-down version of the Rentals or the Stereo. **DF**

**Lando's 45 "...The End..." (Harmless) CD-** Relatively new band fronted by Daryl Wilson, who sang for the Bollweevils. The first track, "Open Mind" is fast drummy melodic punk with a nice desperate sound to it, especially in the vocals. After the initial pure fury and chaos, the second track slowed it down a bit and added the backup vocals on the chorus. Unfortunately, the first song is unequalled by the rest of this disc. It's very well played pop-punk derived stuff with some older Chicago punk influences barely showing through. I wish there was a bit more bass in the production, and I hope Lando's 45 develop more into a powerful act as they show a lot of potential. They seem to be on their way. **dup**

**The Lapse "Heaven Ain't Happenin'" (Southern) CD-** The Lapse are living proof of the maxim that less is more. I don't mean that their sound is in any way minimalist -- in fact, as their opening track, "Buffet," shows, they're happiest when they're using their instruments to erect walls of thick, droning sound. No, I'm referring to the makeup of the band itself, which consists of a grand total of two people, Chris and Toko, who between themselves handle all the instrumental and vocal duties, in the process making an album that sounds as if it was crafted by a five-piece band. When Toko sings (at one point in Japanese!) it has a lyrical, sweet quality, when Chris sings it's in more of a half-talking half-singing style, a la Pavement. But regardless of who is handling the vocal duties, the Lapse show a remarkable breadth of ability -- "Heaven Ain't Happenin'" is successfully able to leap from distortion-drenched freakouts to delicate lullabies without ever feeling forced or fragmented. **DF**

**Lazy Cain "July to October" (Doghouse) CD-** God, what a terrible name for a record. It's like in those months of recording the entire creative energy of the collective members of Lazy Cain was so sucked away that they had none left for a title. The songs on this release follow suit: they are unremarkable songs for a damn good band, at least judging by their first record. The songs tend to drag here and do not have the energy, catchiness, or urgency I was hoping for. This is easily missable. **RS**

**Less than Jake "Borders and Boundaries" (Fat Wreck) CD-** Well ska came and left in the blink of an eye. Meanwhile bands like Less than Jake did the major thing and moved on-- back to the greener pastures of indie rock. Here we have a LTJ that clearly realized that very few people actually want to hear ska anymore, thus most of the songs here are simply clever, tight, and catchy pop-punk. Not bad stuff at all, really. I've

never considered myself a big fan of this band, but I've always respected them and acknowledged that even though most of their peers were playing stupid party ska-punk, these guys clearly rose above the pack and hammered out some great tunes. Can a band go from indie to major and back to indie? I think this is proof that it can be done. **RS**

**Lesser Birds of Paradise "A Suitable Frame" (Loose Thread) CD-** Chicago singer/songwriter Mark Janka's solo project, the Lesser Birds of Paradise, is actually a collaborative effort featuring the contributions of nine musicians, but it still reads like a subtle, delicate, and entirely personal confession. Peppered with literary references and modest poeticism, "A Suitable Frame" melds simple and beautiful songs of loss and sadness with languid, folksy tunes that, at times, bring to mind the utterly precious songs of bands like Belle & Sebastian or the Lucksmiths. There's no fancy studio tricks or ostentatious musicianship here, but after a few listens the ornate instrumentation of "A Suitable Frame" becomes apparent; the accordions and ukeleles and dulcimers and sound effects don't call attention to themselves, but they're there nonetheless, fleshing out a sound that is simultaneously simple and complex. In other words, for something so quiet, there sure is a lot to sink your teeth into here. Quite beautiful and highly recommended. **DF**

**The Letter E "No. Five Long Player" (Tiger Style) CD-** Wait, if this is the debut full length, why is it called "No. Five Long Player"? Are there four more albums like this sitting around somewhere? Because if they are anything like this one, it would be nice if they could see the light of day. So, this is an instrumental "super-group", blah, blah, blah. How about I just tell you that this album is quite nice and be on my way? Yeah, this album is tight, and though it is subtle, there are still plenty of nuances to keep the listener intrigued. Each song takes an idea to its full extent then stops before it gets redundant. If you are looking for breakdowns and sing-alongs, look elsewhere; if you want beautiful understated instrumental indie rock, park your car here. **JM**

**Libraness "Yesterday.. and Tomorrow's Shells" CD-** With Libraness, Ash Bowie re-emerges from four years (one of which saw him playing bass in Helium) of obscurity since his former band threw in the proverbial towel. As Polvo's singer/guitarist, Bowie was responsible for most of the band's off-kilter guitar innovation that occurred during the early 90s indie boom. Libraness continues in the Polvo tradition replacing Polvo's sporadic math rock and atonal noise jaunts with simpler, melodic songwriting. Bowie's relaxed mood is evident here as is the fact that most of these songs came directly off four track noodlings done during the Polvo era. "No Separation" and "Hit the Horizon" (think of Gary Young playing on a farm) sees his folksy side emerge, while "The Memory" and "New and Old Clouds" embark on experiments of guitar plucking that run the listener in circles. This is definitely a cautious listen. It's almost as if Bowie should have made two albums - one experimental, one poppy - since his focus changes so often that it's hard to find any coherence between tracks. **JBC**

**Longwave "Endsongs" (LunaSea) CD-**



# Track Attack

The LOI Review Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS  
du proserpio: dup  
Jonah Brucker-Cohen: JBC

Dan Frantic: DF  
Jonah Bayer: JB

Jason Murphy: JM  
Adam Parks: AP

Have you ever heard of the Candyskins? Probably not, though they have had a string of major label releases. This band reminds me of them in more ways than one. First off, their songs are poppy and catchy with a touch of synth and rock and roll guitar to spice things up. Both bands' singers have the same delivery: a little whiny, a little deadpan, and a little sarcastic. But most importantly, both bands are totally dispensable. Yeah, a song or two might catch your ear, but you won't catch yourself humming any of them in the shower or even on the way to work or school. Having said all this, though, I would not be surprised to see these guys have a video on MTV. Ugh. JM

**Lovelight Shine "Makes Out" (Big Wheel) CD-** So I was digging through my garbage the other day (don't be alarmed, this isn't a normal activity) when the glimmer of plastic shrink-wrap caught my eye. Now usually I don't just throw away CD's, especially when I haven't even opened them yet. However, somehow this CD ended up in the trash. I reached down to pick it up and noticed a sticker on the cover that said this band is made up of 3/4 of Jejeune. I have always thought Jejeune was a tad overrated, but thought I owed this a listen—especially since I had just rescued it from that used CD bin in the sky. I put this in my CD expecting to hear music that would instantly initiate yawns but instead got a taste of balls to the walls rock n' roll. If you thought the Damn Personals were the epitome of Rock n' Roll, think again because Lovelight Shine take it up a notch. Think you can handle it? Guitar harmonies pick slides, shredding solos, and vocals that sounded great in the 1970's and still haven't lost their charm. These guys remind me a lot of the Dandy Warhols with a bit of "Ziggy Stardust" era Bowie mixed in for good measure. The only problem with this album is it's only five songs, but I predict a rock opera in the works. Big Wheel is one of the few indie labels who continue to take risks and put out a diverse group of musical acts and this record will not disappoint. Thank you Lovelight Shine, and long live rock n' roll! JB

**LudditeClone "The Arsonist And The Architect" (Relapse/Cyberdine 243) CDep-** Relapse continues to impress me with their professional approach to releasing a wide variety of hard music. LudditeClone plays a very updated version of thrash metal with sharp time changes and breaks into some slow parts. I wouldn't call this grindcore as it's too clearly distinguishable and not a high speed blur. The vocals, though choked, screaming and snarling, actually have a perceivable range and these guys can rip it up with a super fast style where all the elements are obvious. I love metal with good drumming and it greatly drives this mix. The drummer is more than competent, but very human and not trying to play too fast. Crazy good, although it's only 6 songs. Anyone who still uses the word thrash will love this, as will anyone who likes superfast hardcore. dup

**Lungfish "Necrophones" (Dischord) CD-** I was a Lungfish fan in 1991 when the band's first EP came out on the now defunct Simple Machines label. Back then, this Baltimore, MD based powerhouse cranked out more pummeling chords and thunderous vocals than any of its peers on the indie circuit. When they played live, singer Daniel Higgs' scruffy beard and

intense stares would be enough to both charm and frighten even the most avid fan. Now in their thirteenth year and eighth LP, Lungfish continue to set the tone for their own brand of slow, grating post-punk. Even after so many albums, I still think guitarist Asa Osborne is one of the best and most underrated musicians in indie rock. His skillful instrumentation always pulls the band through its murky choruses with the perfect amount of wit. "Necrophones" reaffirms Lungfish's position of conveying social themes with their music, especially on "Sex War" when Higgs sings "Sex war bondage/ Sex war freedom/ Freedom/ Free the free from freedom". Despite its sometimes depressing undertones, "Necrophones" is a nice addition to the Lungfish library. JBC

**Madball "Hold It Down" (Epitaph) CD-** I have seen my own feelings about this act change several times over the years. Regardless of that, they're still one of the cornerstones of NYHC, and one of the few that escaped the 80's. This album is devoted to the NY sound and scene, although many might say that the NY scene is nonexistent these days. If you've been to any NY shows in the past 10 years, this is the album for the older, tattooed guys who still show up in undershirts. Once upon a time, no one cared about your band's flimsy politics as much as they cared about not getting their ass kicked at shows. And yes, some people miss those days. Tough, hard hardcore with enough speed and fury to keep me interested. Probably one of Madball's more solid albums. If you're into scouring lyrics for something to offend you, stay away. dup

**Mad Caddies "The Holiday Has Been Cancelled" (Fat Wreck Chords) CDep-** The Mad Caddies are one of the few third-wave ska bands on the planet that actually manage to get me somewhat excited about their style of music. That's probably because their songs aren't all anchored down by that hideous, played-out-to-death "chikka chikka" syncopated guitar strum whose every permutation has already been used up by other bands. Ska-punk may still be a bad word, but at least the Mad Caddies have the good sense to throw in some solid guitar chops, falsetto backing vocals, and speakeasy-style muted wah-wah trumpets on this five-song EP. In fact, I'm not even sure that I should be calling these guys a ska band—they're really more of a punk band with horns. And they cover Abba! DF

**Mad Parade "God Bless America" (Dr. Strange) CD-** Uh oh, I have a bad feeling about this. From what I gather these guys are old school street punks who got together and decided to make a record. I generally don't like this type of music (the last Explosion record excluded) and this isn't an exception. It's obvious that these guys have their shit together and have the whole street punk thing pretty much perfected (which isn't rocket science), but this just doesn't really excite me. Maybe it's because I'm not from the "streets" I'm from the "suburbs." It could also be because I don't share an overwhelming feeling of nationalism with these guys. Whatever it is, I just can't get seem into this. If you like street punk you might like this guys, but then again if you're a big street punk fan, you're probably reading the wrong zine. JB

**Mark Kozelek "Rock And Roll Singer"**

**(Badman) CDep-** 7 new tracks from a member of the famed Red House Painters. If you're not familiar with the act, think lowly, honest Americana with a dark hue cast over it. This record appears to be merely Mark singing over minimal arrangements, with some good recording techniques. Quiet, lush songs of folk residue and calming warmth. Sure, it has that melancholic edge to it, but it picks up in all the right places and pushes the tracks to powerful conclusions. Fans of RHP, American Music Club and the Uncle Tupelo diaspora (Son Volt, Wilco, etc) will not be disappointed. This might not be the best place to start if you're new to insurgent country (it's not a bad word, really) but it's pretty damn good. dup

**Metroschifter "Encapsulated" (Doghouse) CD-** Interesting idea: a Metroschifter album on which Metroschifter does not perform. Rather, other bands "hand picked" by Metroschifter record songs written for this album by Metroschifter. I've been hearing about this disc since this zine's inception, back when I was still excited about outfits like The Getup Kids, The Promise Ring, Elliott, Ink and Dagger, and Burning Airlines—who all perform songs here. Unfortunately, the two and a half years I waited for its release was anticlimactic, as its pretty boring. I guess some would wrongly accuse Metroschifter's few dynamic changes, unwavering chord progressions, and monotone melodies of being boring. The sad part is that even very good bands like the Enkindels, Refused, and Rye Coalition have a hard time interpreting Metroschifter's music in a way that recreates the subtleties of Scott Ritcher's music (with the possible exception of Rye Coalition). Almost all the bands here are better when sticking to their own formulas, while Metroschifter is much more of a sonic journey when they do it themselves. I'll pass. RS

**Midget Handjob "Midnight Snack Break at the Poodle Factory" (Epitaph) CD-** Sample initial practice session for Midget Handjob:

*Rest of the Band:* Hey, you're Keith Morris! You used to sing for Black Flag and the Circle Jerks!  
*Keith:* Yeah, that's me.

*RotB:* Where have you been the past 15 years?  
*Keith:* Oh here and there. I released a shitty album a few years ago when punk became commercial again in a Circle Jerks reunion that shouldn't have happened, then I dated Debbie Gibson—who sang on that record. Electric youth is right.

*RotB:* Well, are you still playing music?  
*Keith:* Yeah, here and there. I've got a great idea right now. I think we should start a band where I wax poetic saying things like "the young republican ladies auxiliary won't be performing fellatio tonight..." and "just because your hairy armed dentist named Harry is also your automobile specialist..." and other wacky stuff, while you guys play weird disjointed Dixieland and country music underneath. Whatdaya think?

*RotB:* Great idea, Keith. Except none of us play very well.  
*Keith:* It's cool. After all, I am Keith Morris, so I'm sure Epitaph will release and promote our records all over the world based on that fact alone. RS

**The Monkeywrench "Electric Children" (Estrus) CD-** If the Fallouts and the Rolling Stones got together and ate a large batch of mushrooms, they'd probably sound a bit like the Monkeywrench, the latest project of Northwest rock icon Tim Kerr. The Monkeywrench, play twangy, lightly psychedelic 60's garage stom, from lighty when psychedelic meant fuzzed-out

guitars rather than tweaky electronic effects. This is definite Estrus material (has Estrus ever released a band that didn't play some variant of garage music?), but with a slightly retro feel. I've never been a huge fan of this type of stuff but I suppose this would be your cup of tea if you liked this style. DF

**Motorchrist "666-Pack" (RAFR) CDep-** Dirty garage that one has come to expect from RAFR. Songs about drinking ("all I want is some vodka, and I want it for free") being at the bottom, Evel Keneivel and a complete braggadocio song about their lead guitarist. However, Motorchrist layers strong, clear guitar leads and tight vocal harmonies over the standard garage layout with a touch of the metal glam flavor. Some very enjoyable stuff on this 8-track Ep with a Ramones-no, wait, Dictators style of rugged pop. Motorchrist pulls it off exceptionally well here—long hair, devils horns and all. More please. dup

**The Mountain Goats "The Coroner's Gambit" (Absolutely Kosher) CD-** On his seventh album, The Mountain Goats' Jon Damielle seems more composed than ever. Although noisy acoustic guitar riffs continue to float above his grainy vocals, Damielle seems more content to use this technique as a definition of his sound. "Onions" is a heartfelt ballad with insights to plentiful harvests while "Blue-jays and Cardinals" and "Elijah" spur up memories of long-lost travels through Damielle's past. After 10 years of spirited songwriting, countless records and collaborations (featuring Alastair Galbraith), there is still no end in sight for this gifted troubadour. He has become a martyr to his own musical cause. "The Coroner's Gambit" is a nice complement to the Mountain Goats prolific collection because of its attention to simplistic yet compelling song structures. JBC

**The Movelife "This Time Next Year" (Revelation) CD-** On first listen this is a throw-away CD. Well, maybe not for those you who clamor tooth and nail for A Newfound Glory or Saves the Day. I mean this is competent stuff. Tight, fast, melodic, and catchy Long Island pop punk that stands right up there with the best in the genre. On second and third listen I found myself looking past the hordes of easily made comparisons and into some great music. So there you go. If you like the style then this is for you. However, I feel I must throw my two cents in: do we really need another band with blazing palm-mutes set to vocal harmonies about girls... even if it is very well done? RS

**Mushmouth "Lift the Curse" (Triple Crown) CD-** This sounds a lot like Hatebreed. No, I take that back—this sounds exactly like Hatebreed. And while it is nice to see that these guys are playing instruments instead of robbing the elderly, it does bring up the time-honored question—does the world really need more tough-guy bands that sound like Hatebreed? I think not. I'm assuming that since Hatebreed hadn't put out a record since their full length on Victory 3 years ago, Mushmouth felt that they could step up and fill the void, as if the "hardcore copyright" on Hatebreed's music had expired. Unfortunately for Mushmouth, they come off as pretty boring and generic both musically and lyrically (I would cite specific references, but the lyrics are written so illegibly that I can't read any of



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them, too bad). I would keep making fun of this band but the singer of Fury of Five is a guest vocalist on this album, and he could kick my ass in a second. Be afraid...I know am. JB

**My So-Called Band "The Punk Girl Next Door" (Yesha) CD-** We're getting to the point in LOI's history where we can't afford to print a review of every CD we get in the mail. Some of these reasons include that we don't want to write about some of the shit we get, no one wants to see 50 pages of record reviews, and most simply that a good deal of the stuff we get will be very very hard to find for an average music collector—no matter how good the music on that release may be. Anyways, I just had to review this record. I mean, they're only named after one of my favorite television shows of all time... sort of. Okay, the music is quite forgettable. It's very immature, unoriginal, and the vocals are terrible. Not to mention—but not entirely important—the insert pictures of the band make them look like bigger dorks than I'm sure they are. What really makes this CD worthwhile for me, and the reason I hope they sell 20,000 copies of this, is the manifesto included with the CD. It intelligently and unpretentiously claims that the motive of the band is not to become jaded or impersonal towards potential fans. In essence, they want to bridge the gap between themselves and their listeners, then keep it that way. I wish certain members of certain music groups with the initials ATD-I would listen. Good luck guys, now have your guitarist cut his hair. RS

**The National Acrobat "For All Practical Purposes, is Dead" (Arise) CD-** This is a pretty fun CD. It's somewhat mathematical rock and roll, with relentless hardcore rhythms and chugs, but a great melodic aspect as well. Unlike a lot of hardcore bands that use dissonant chords to obscure melody and create rhythm, the National Acrobat doesn't sacrifice tone for the sake of aggression, and has produced here a driving hardcore album that needs not resort to emo parts to display a sense of melody. The songwriting is pretty solid, musicianship pretty competent, and the lyrics are okay. Vocals on this recording are a bit weak at times, but the overall energy is still high. AP

**The Nerve Agents "Days of the White Owl" (Revelation) CD-** I wrote this band's last record off as a bad early-80s-cum-quasi-youth-crew-revivalist recording as it failed to do anything different from the horde of other bands in Rev's back catalog. I got a lot of shit for that when I went home to San Francisco. My friends there eagerly proclaimed the Nerve Agents' praises, so with much hesitation I went to see them a few days later. I now admit I was wrong. Not only were they a truly energetic and exciting live act, they were also very different from the bands in same back catalog I once compared them to. Instead, the Nerve Agents have the howling, creepy guitar progressions more closely related to a band like the New York Dolls than anything in Rev's past. Add a hint of rock-a-billy creepiness, a few youth crew shout-out choruses, and the singer from Redemption 87 and you're getting kind of close. Now, it's not often I admit to the world that I was wrong about my musical opinions, so don't get used to it. But, if this band continues to grow and find their own musical territory, then I may have to eat my words even

more. Hand me a spoon. RS

**The New Amsterdams "Never You Mind" (Heroes & Villains/Vagrant) CD-** Soft strummy emo (?) from the members of the Get Up Kids. It has that remorseful feel all over it, but slow tempos do not lasting songs make. I suppose this would be the acoustic side project where the GUKs work out their more 'sensitive side' when not crafting the soaring power-pop that they're known for. Strictly for giggly female fans and people who like self-absorbed 180-degree side projects. Features covers of the Afghan Whigs' "When We Two Parted" and Boilermaker's "Slow Down." dup

**New Rising Sons "Thieves and Angels" (GrapeOS) CDep-** Members of the New Rising Sons used to be in Texas is the Reason, Into Another, and Youth of Today, but you wouldn't guess it from listening to this four-song ep, not in a million years. "Falling Out" is the only pretty song here, albeit in a very "120 Minutes" alt-rock sort of way. Besides that, this is way too by-the-numbers for my tastes, identical to any of the third-rate Radiohead clones that are flooding the market these days. Fans of Chamberlain's later stuff might dig this; otherwise, steer clear. DF

**Ninedayswonder "The Scenery is in Disguise Here" (Dim Mak) CD-** It's a bit peculiar, really, that so few bands outside America sing in their native languages. Obviously the huge population of the United States has helped to make English the musical *lingua franca* throughout the world, but I always find it surprising that so few bands from, say, Germany or Japan, actually sing in German or Japanese. Maybe the only international bands that break big in America are the ones that are willing to forego their own languages for lyrics in English, but I still think it's kind of unfortunate. Needless to say, Tokyo's Ninedayswonder lack the easy acquired-language proficiency of Vladimir Nabokov, so they need to let their music do most of the communicating—screamy, spastic emo that reads a bit like a rougher-around-the-edges version of former Dim Mak labelmates Planes Mistaken For Stars. At times I even hear a fairly strong Fugazi influence. This is good, but it ain't great. And it ain't poetry. DF

**Nobodys "I've Been Everywhere" (Suburban Home) CD-** You want to know why you've been everywhere? Because 13-yr old pop punk morons will buy anything. Keep your tour pictures to yourself. (I'm jealous that the bassist took a picture with Lemmy). Boring. dup

**Nobodys/The Beautys "Hugh" (Sub City) CD-** While I'm not too familiar The Beautys, I was shocked and appalled to learn that the Nobodys signed to Sub City. Allow me to explain: the last Dillinger 4 and Weakerthans records were some of the best records we've received this month, hands down. But I'm sure I'm not alone when I say that I've never been impressed by the Nobodys generic brand of pop punk. This release hasn't swayed my opinion. The Nobodys sound like the Queers, are anti-PC like the Queers, and are about as interesting to listen to as the Queers... oh wait, the Queers are on Hopeless too. There you go. The Beautys are a bit better and play mid-tempo female fronted punk rock which doesn't stray too far from X-Ray Specs territory. This

sounds like early 80's punk and those who regularly read the magazine know how I feel about that genre of music. This is on Sub City so it does benefit a worthwhile organization called The Diana Price Fish Foundation, which definitely deserves some funding. Charity aside, I wouldn't be able to sleep at night if I recommend this record to anyone. Here's an idea, get a Sub City catalog and please just order anything except this release (and maybe the last Fifteen record). You'll thank me and help benefit a good cause. JB

**NOFX "Pump Up the Valuum" (Epitaph) CD-** If you like NOFX, then there's no reason why you would not like this CD. If you think that successive NOFX albums get worse and worse, then don't buy this one. It is the next logical step after "So Long and Thanks for all the Shoes". The politics have become even more generic (What more can they say after The Decline?), but perhaps that's a good thing, considering the fact that the majority of their fan-base has yet to take high school social studies. They also don't falter from the polished pop-punk that they do so well (What more can they do after The Decline?). Fortunately, NOFX are still funny guys, but only if you really want them to be funny. For example, they do say "Montag ist zehr gut", which is hilarious in context if you know German, but you don't. For die-hard fans, a must-have. For people who can drive legally, not the most important album to own. AP

**Nothing Cool "Taking Advantage of Stupid People" (Cheetah) CD-** As Mr. Frantic so eloquently stated last issue—discographies are a privilege, not a right. I can understand why a band like Rocket from the Crypt finds it necessary to release all of their out of print singles and comp. songs on CD, but is this really necessary for a band like Nothing Cool? More importantly, has anyone even heard of this band? I worked at a record store all summer and I don't remember a single customer coming into the store asking for the rare, out-of-print Nothing Cool split seven-inch released on Too Drunk Productions. As Jeremy Cool (Note to Jeremy: some band names just weren't meant to double as last names) states in the liner notes, he was reluctant to release some of the earlier material. However, Mr. Cool justified it by saying, "we were young, and we're allowed to suck every once in a while." Unfortunately, I think that saying this band "sucks every once in a while" is like saying "The last 5 Pennywise albums sounded kind of similar." It's a bit of an understatement. As we descend into the new millennium, there are enough Screeching Weasel sound alikes, and the last thing the music world needs is a complete collection of Nothing Cool tracks. JB

**The Olive Group "Blue" (Post-Parlo) CD-** The Olive Group makes pop music that is nice. I'm choosing my words carefully here; their songs aren't "exciting," or "edgy," or "gorgeous." They're just "nice." Pleasant, breezy pop, slightly jazzy, a bit like a less perverse Pavement, perhaps a bit like a less saccharine Papas Fritas. There are seven songs on this CD, and they're all of roughly the same quality—that is to say, they're pretty good—but nothing really stands out from the pack. DF

**One Fine Day (Green/Genet) CD-** Oh boy, more metal hardcore to review and I can hardly wait! Hey, I thought that the metal hardcore thing was out of style and emo rock was the new hip genre,

right? Well let's give these guys a break since they're from Belgium and maybe they're a little behind the times (don't they worship David Hasselhoff over there?) Actually in comparison to David Hasselhoff One Fine Day is pretty damn good. Once again, we're not breaking any new ground here but these guys are at least solid. The vocals and music remind me a lot of Left For Dead but once in a while these guys bust into a melodic or even slightly jazzy part. One thing that bugs me about this album is that the mix is so bad you can hardly hear the drums at all, in fact the whole production aspect is pretty shoddy. I think these guys sound best when they are doing the more experimental type stuff as opposed to the straight up metal core. If they continue to experiment they could develop into something unique but I'll pass on this for now. JB

**One King Down "Gravity Wins Again" (Equal Vision) CDep-** Another issue, another One King Down ep. Geez, how long can a band go on releasing eps? Albany's hardest has like 3 or 4 eps and only one album—and their only full length was with a singer who barely lasted long enough to tour with the band! Anyway, this release seems to be something just to kill time—and earn money—until they finally buckle down and record a second full length. There's only 3 new songs here, but fans—like myself—will be delighted to see that Rob Fusco has managed to work out his problems with the rest of the OKD boys and is back in the saddle. These songs aren't the best I've heard, but they will have to do. The other 4 songs are from the long out of print "Absolve" ep way back in the day, and are, I think, recorded with ex-ex-singer Bill Brown, who clearly does not live up to Rob's vocal prowess. So, make up your own mind. Hardcore for the hardcore some say of OKD, I say I'll have to wait for their next extended release. RS

**Otaku "Bitwise Operators" (Malvado) CD-** At times Otaku's dubby grooves may sound like DJ Shadow submerged in a haze of pot smoke, but a look at the band's thanks list reveals that their influences—Kraftwerk, Dr. Dre, Anthony Braxton, Amon Tobin, Sun Ra, the Residents—comprise a veritable panoply of leftfield musicianship. There's a dark triphop feel to Otaku's songs, but they steer well clear of the sameness and predictability that affect similar electronic bands by throwing in old samples from sci-fi movies, chunky hip-hop beats, record rewinds, and all varieties of musical trickery. The end result, however, isn't a goofy or spastic collection of bleeps and blips, but rather a fairly coherent album that borrows from a wide variety of musical styles without ever resorting to theft. All in all, Otaku is a very pleasant surprise, and definitely a band I'd suggest tracking down even if you usually aren't into electronic music. DF

**Paris, Texas "Braziliant!" (Polyvinyl) CDep-** First of all, this is a genius idea for an album title, although I also would have liked "Czechstravaganza!" or "Japantastic!" or "Taiwonderful!" While the musical output of Paris, Texas on this five-song EP is arguably not as original as the band's ability to infuse titles with geographic qualities, it's still pretty good. The music is what you've come to know and love from Polyvinyl: straightforward, hi-energy rock with a little bit of a Fugazi



# Track Attack

The LOI Review Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS

Dan Frantic: DF

Jason Murphy: JM

du proserpio: dup

Jonah Bayer: JB

Adam Parks: AP

Jonah Brucker-Cohen: JBC

feeling to it. The standout here is easily the fourth song, "Future Scars," which kicks off with a staccato rhythm before launching into a guitar onslaught. DF

## The Peabodys "Dilemma" (Mutant Pop)

7+— Some of the worst, most derivative music I have heard recently has come from the Mutant Pop label. If this label had its way, music would have stopped developing at the Ramones and we would all be wearing leather jackets and drinking beer. While I do like the Ramones, I shudder at the Mutant Pop view of music and the world in general. This sounds like the Ramones' younger brothers, who want to be tough but just can't pull it off and end up sounding poppier than their parents. This is just wrong, music has come along way (some could even claim that punk has evolved and gotten better), and this band is stuck in the past. Not only is this bad, but its insulting. JM

## Pedro the Lion "Progress" (ChapelleTNI/Suicidè Squeeze) 7+/children's story-

Beautifully bound and illustrated, this 7" by Pedro the Lion is nestled inside a kids story by Oakland's Buchen entitled "A Guitar for Janie." The story is a sadly sweet tale of an eight-year old girl whose quest to obtain a tennis racket from the garage so she can play air guitar for an audience of stuffed animals in her room leads to an accidental fall and a trip to the dentist. Pedro the Lion's songs, titled "June 18, 1976" and "April 6, 2039," don't directly relate to the story, although they too weave a tale of sorts, charting a mother's tragic suicide and the effect it has on her child sixty years later. Pedro the Lion's singer David Bazan writes beautiful slow songs like those of Damien Jurado, and his skills as a lyricist continue to grow. "June 18, 1976" is as poignant and bittersweet as a Radiohead song. And, thankfully, the religious themes found in much of Pedro the Lion's other work are conspicuously absent here, although the press sheet's assertion that the songs and story here both deal with feelings of guilt and fear could, in light of Pedro the Lion's lyrics, give raise to an interesting theological discussion. Nevertheless, this is a unique release that clearly displays a significant amount of care and effort, and Pedro the Lion's songs are their most haunting yet. DF

**Pele "The Nudes" (Polyvinyl) CD-** I think it's inevitable that this three-piece band is going to be compared with Tristeza, considering that they both possess a similar, all-instrumental sound. But while Tristeza often veer off into space-rock territory, Pele keep their feet rooted more firmly on the ground, constructing melodies that are intricate but constrained. Pele's nimble percussion and complicated guitar work are reminiscent of "This Eclipse" era Polvo, but four or five songs into "The Nudes," all the songs begin to sound the same. In fact, I find it difficult to listen to this all the way through, not because it's bad, but for the sole reason that it's all very similar-sounding. DF

## Pennywise "Live at the Key Club" (Epitaph)

CD- Oh man. So I used to have "Unknown Road" which was okay for a little while. Other than that record, I just always thought that all Pennywise songs were cliché and too anxious to epitomize Epitaph. Boy was I wrong!! Quite honestly, I don't know or care enough about

these guys to say anything meaningful about this record. The songs are faster than they are on the studio albums. I noticed that. And as far as I can tell, they didn't fuck up all that much. Congratulations. If you like Pennywise, and lots of them, then you will want to own this. It has 18 live tracks and about ten million pictures of them. AP

## Piebald "The Rock Revolution Will Not Be Televised" (Big Wheel Recreation) CDep-

What more can I say about Piebald that I haven't said before? Ross has accused me repeatedly of constantly using Piebald as a reference point when describing other bands, and I guess I'm guilty as charged, but the fact that a lot of bands remind me of Piebald and not the other way around should say something about the esteem in which I hold this Boston band. The five songs on "The Rock Revolution" continue in the same vein as Piebald's previous full-length "If It Weren't for Venetian Blinds it Would be Curtains for Us All," which is to say they are beautifully produced rockers characterized by singer Travis Shettel's not-quite-on-key vocals. They draw from the emo sound but manage to keep it new, probably because the guys in Piebald are talented musicians so they're able to mix things up a bit musically. This is similar to the Getup Kids, the Anniversary, Favez, etc. etc. etc., but it's better than almost all of them. DF

## Pinhead Gunpowder "8 Chords, 328 Words" (Lookout!) 7+—

Now that Green Day has essentially become a staple on Adult Alternative Radio, those of us who aren't into the Barenaked Ladies and their ilk can still count on Pinhead Gunpowder, the much-ballyhooed "side project" of Green Day's Billie Joe and Aaron Cometbus (of the eponymous zine). Pinhead Gunpowder's last few albums have been getting progressively more average, but both songs here showcase them in top form. "Landlords" is easily as good as anything found on "Dookie," and although at first I was a bit taken aback by the trumpet and trombone on the B-side, "Black Mountain Pt. 3," it's still a great — albeit short — song. This is the type of record you can listen to three times in a row and not get bored with. DF

## The Posers "Anti-Christian Animosity" (Cargo/Grilled Cheese) CD-

Following up their album on Oink!, the stripped down Posers return with their 1982-style hardcore punch & thrash. Fast, simple and bloody hardcore that most people would mistake as punk nowadays. And that singer, he's f'in pissed. Tracks like "Suburban Cokehead," "First-Class Asshole" and "Less Fashion More Thrashin'" drive it home. If these guys slow down, it's only for a second and then back to the beating. Of course, it's nothing that hasn't been done, but it's always good to hear it in the days of fake indie labels and album samplers. Brutal and real ferocity that might never again make it to college radio. dup

## The Postage Era (Par Avon) CDep-

This band writes some of the best-thought-through songs I've heard in a while. Brilliant transitions between clean and arpeggio emo parts and rocking overdriven chord progressions, all composed of pretty original melodies. Complete the sound with appropriately inspired vocals and thoughtful, interesting lyrics that have a great presence and continuity over the music.

The Postage Era put this six-song out on their own, but look for a full length coming out soon on Actiondriver records. Keep track of this band. AP

## The Pre-teens "Why don't you marry it" (Sassy Wench) CD-

I have no problem admitting that I was wrong (which happens pretty often), and boy was I wrong with my preconceptions about this CD. Let's just say that the cover art is a tad too D.I.Y. for my tastes and it was handed to Ross and I by a spiky haired record store employee, so I was expecting a riot-grill-meets-high-school-talent-show kind of thing at best. Instead, I got one of the best female-fronted punk bands I've heard since Sarge's demise. The Pre-Teens (made up of two girls, one boy) sound ranges from Sarge or Braid-esque mid-tempo rockers, to full out punk tunes which would make Kathleen Hanna proud. While I think they pull off the less noisy stuff better, I give them credit for staying diverse, when most bands are looking to be pigeonholed into whatever is the popular genre of the week. I have seen some interviews with The Pre-Teens in bigger punk rock publications recently, and have the feeling that this band could be huge if enough people are open-minded enough to listen to the music and ignore the cover art. Yes, the art is really that bad. JB

## Propagandhi "Today's Empires, Tomorrow's Ashes" (Fat Wreck) CD-

Go ahead, ask me how long I've been waiting for this record. Go on, ask. Around 5 years, ever since I first popped in the band's last record. And you ask me if it's worth the wait? Hell yes. Sure the band lost much-loved bassist/singer, George, to the Weakerthans, and replaced him with soon-to-be-loved Todd, former bassist for I-spy, but the record is great. From the opening crash of the disc until the last record, Canada's finest trade in some of their technical might for sheer power and speed. Although I think the music may have been a bit more textured and complex on their previous two records, the songs here are meaningful and gripping. Of course, in my opinion the best part of a Propagandhi record is not the guitar or drumming wizardry they are more than capable of, but rather Chris' poignant and personal lyrics. And, the band doesn't just choose to critique American hegemony, but also points fingers with a comic edge to the punk scene itself. Whether poking fun at ska-kids on their first record, or at Nazi punks on the second, the song, "Back to the Mot League" which all too aptly criticizes hardcore's bullshit politics and bone-headedness to a frightening point of accuracy. I'm not going to go too far and say this is better than "Less Talk More Rock" 'cause it's not. But, if you're like me and eat up all things Propagandhi with a spoon the size of Utah, then this is not just a great record, but rather a life's blood. RS

## Puffball "Leadfoot Ninja" (Glazed) 7+—

If I were Puffball, I would fire my producer, as the vocals are almost inaudible in this mix (particularly the all-important A-side). I would also probably try something new, as the second the new needle dropped, I thought "Nashville Pussy" (the band, not the... uh). C'mon, there's even the obligatory Motorhead cover (which is also the best thing on here). Maybe this whole southern-fried tough-as-nails rock thing that has gotten some press has just totally lost me. Maybe if I could hear the lyrics, my opinion would be different, but I'm going to have to pass for now. JM

## Quagmire "The Senator" (Carcrash) CDep-

Quagmire are more "aggro" than "mathy". Does this sound like your average record review? What the hell does aggro mean anyways? Some define the term as thick basslines and snarling vocals that make hardcore kids run for cover. Some think of it as another term for "in your face". I believe aggro is rooted in the physiological realm, where the music not only stimulates your creative mind but it actually knocks you unconscious in the process. Quagmire fall somewhere on the aggro heap and pelt audiences with guitar riffs that sound a little too rehearsed to evoke anything inventive. Some of these tracks just sound too crunchy - like someone left the delay pedal on after the first riff. The only winner on this EP is "Process of Elimination" but it still speeds through enough head-nodding rhythms to make Shellac sound unrepentive. Overall it's hard to tell whether they are genuinely noisy or just following current trends. JBC

## Quest for Quintana Roo (New Disorder)

CD- All I could think about during this album is "when is the new Radiohead going to hit my doorstep?" Why was I thinking this? Because this album is just boring punk rock with a few hardcore-style breakdowns, that's why. To keep my attention, this band would have had to scream my name repeatedly, then have someone come over and ring my annoying doorbell, because their three or four chords were not doing the trick. Pass. JM

## Rainer Maria "A Better Version of Me" (Polyvinyl) CD-

I really like this band. There is something to be said for consistently solid songwriting and flawless execution. Rainer Maria's second album helped remind me that indie pop infused with a little grit and enthusiasm can really hit the spot. "A Better Version of Me" reconfirms this notion by seeing the band root their potential in booty-shaking songs. "The Contents of Lincoln's Pockets" is downright danceable and even had me singing along after a few listens. JBC

## Rancid (Hellcat) CD-

I'm not the biggest authority on these guys, forchrissakes, I only have their first album and I don't think I've heard it in 5 years. However, all the work that Hellcat's been doing has obviously influenced their sound. The album starts off with a more pronounced crusty hardcore sound that recalls the super-fast early 80's acts like Battalion Of Saints and Antidote. Of course, there's still the patented sound that people attribute to Rancid listening to too many Clash records. Here, it doesn't even sound like that's a relevant dig at them. There's a looser, gang-punk feel to Rancid's sound, doubtlessly influenced by the varied sounds of other bands in their US Thugs crew. The 70's street punk influences are rounded out by the fast hardcore and raw rhythmic catchiness that gets folded in. The catchier songs are completely surrounded by back-to-basics short and fast pounders. Testing their audience, are they? Not bad at all, and that's with my old biases included. dup

## Red Tape "High Revoltage" (New Age) CD-

Fast, tough hardcore with lotsa sustained guitar parts from this Sacramento act. And yet it's still very catchy in a real high-energy way like Black Flag or some of the 80's NY hardcore acts. Thank god someone can play fast and hard and still appeal to kids who want their punk with some melodicism. And the hits



# Track Attack

just keep on coming- open the inner sleeve and all their lyrics are political and damn well written to boot. Plenty of unexpected action with the guitars but the total package has so much energy they could fold nearly anything into their sound. Easily one of the most fun hardcore albums I've heard in a

while, and thankfully I can say that there's no lack of power in the mix. Excellent. Get these cats out on the road and they could easily show up the At The Drive In hype machine. In the meantime, go send New Age your money. **dup**

**Rep Seki/Usurp Synapse (Magister Ludi) 7"**— Just what I needed on a cold winter night, two sides of crazy spastic noise. Rep Seki remind me of Naked City with the quick time and mood changes, the crazy sax (it's not John Zorn, but it's good), and the stuffing of many thoughts into only two songs. Usurp Synapse have no sax, but are just as crazy, and they are also more brutal. Two bands that I will definitely be checking out soon. A special note should be given to the vinyl, it's a beautiful 5" picture disc that makes you remember why CD singles will never be able to touch vinyl. **JM**

**Rhythm of Black Lines "Set a Summery Table" (Sixgunlover) CDep-** What is it with instrumental bands right now? Has the once plentiful lead singer been used to extinction? I admit, there are several instrumental bands that I thoroughly enjoy right now, but there are many more that are just atrocious. And while this band has its merits, I'm not being won over. This sounds like the Police dicking around while Sting went to meditate or even Rush with indie rock aspirations. It's heart is in the right place, but it sounds too forced and treads into bad prog-rock territory. And Sunny Day Real Estate has already cornered the market on indie rock bands that want to be Rush, so your talents are best used elsewhere. **JM**

**The Righteous "...And The Saga Begins" (Chapter 11/TKO) CD-** Rocking Swedish Oi from these trad blond skins, proudly produced by Carl Fritscher of the Templars. The music is rugged in the style of the early 80's British bands like Antisocial and Combat 84. It's almost quaint in the obvious fact that these guys are from a tiny scene and write songs from that point of view ("Anti-Goth Song", "Burn Docklands Down!") as well as classic Oi themes ("Rapist", "Give Peace A Kick In The Face"). Much of the material here is plain ol' singalong Oi, but there's a few tracks that shine thru with some great guitar playing, concise breaks and vocal harmonies that exceed the standard for the style. Considering the attention to detail and sense of progression that the Swedish music scene is known for, The Righteous will probably create some future Oi! milestones. **dup**

**River City High "Forgets Their Manners" (Big Wheel Recreation/Doghhouse) CDep-** River City High hail from Virginia and feature former members of Fun Size and Lazycairn, but as far as I'm concerned they might as well be from California, because their sound seems to be rooted squarely in the SoCal skatepunk scene. Don't get me wrong, they hardly sound like some obnoxious Guttermouth clone, far from it. But their brand of pop-punk is hard to distin-

guish from that of half the bands that circulated around Orange County in the mid-90's. Big Wheel Recreation decided to re-release this ep after the band originally put it out themselves - I'm not saying that it was a bad decision, but I probably would have done otherwise. **DF**

**River City High "Richmond Motel" (Big Wheel Recreation) CDep-** I like this CD. It's pretty honest rock with hints of emo, kind of reminiscent of the first Get Up Kids EP, but with less info about the bands' personal relationship problems. You know how sometimes you get the feeling that a band really loves what they're doing? I get that feeling. About this band. Certainly not the most original tunes to come out, but good groove and great energy. They are from Richmond, VA, which is to their benefit because I have a shirt that says Richmond on it. I got it from my friend who lived there until he was ten or something. He was playing baseball in the yard when his dad came outside and told him that they were moving to Ithaca. Well, little Tyler didn't want to move, so he hit himself in the face with his baseball bat in protest. This brought about the necessity for some dental procedures that resulted in new teeth for Tyler. Years later, when we were in high school, we both worked at Subway in Collegetown. We used to take the frozen cookie dough chunks out of the freezer and eat them raw. Then one day, Tyler's fake tooth got stuck in a piece of frozen cookie dough and fell out. He said "Now I'm less attractive", which was true. He was hideous to look at, but our relationship is not based on physical attraction. It is based on us going to the arcade and him paying for all the games. It is also based on tater-toast. **AP**

**River City Rebels "Racism, Religion And War..." (Victory) CD-** This is odd. RCR are a Vermont band that sounds like Rancid with a 2 man horn section. Wait, make that an EXTREMELY poppy Rancid. Think catchy streetpunk songs loaded with horns, mass backup vocals and a sense of young determination not at all unlike Operation Ivy. Well, it's not bad stuff, but this band certainly has their formula and I daresay this would be much more interesting live. This band would fit in nicely with the New England ska/punk scene that revolves around the Fork In Hand label. They get points for the idealistic political agenda, but this has been done better. **dup**

**Rocket from the Crypt "Dancing Birds" (Glazed) 7"**— The latest wave of nouveau rock-n-roll bands (Hellacopters, Gluecifer, Toilet Boys, etc. etc.) would do well to check out the latest 7" offering from San Diego's Rocket From The Crypt, a classic and critically admired band who clearly still have some aces up their collective sleeve even after all these years, and who rock harder than the significant majority of their Johnny-come-lately peers. Track A, a scorcher with horns, sounds as if it could have been lifted from RFTC's excellent "Scream Dracula Scream" album. Any band that inspires legions of fans to tattoo its logo onto their flesh is clearly worth a second listen. **DF**

**Rocky Votolato "A Brief History" (Your Best Guess) CD-** Singer/songwriter Rocky Votolato has gotten a lot better since his last album, and on "A Brief History" his barely-there whisper pierces your ears with a sort of melancholic intensity. I'm not quite sure why the public seems to have snapped up similar-sounding

performers like Bright Eyes or Badly Drawn Boy without having ever really caught on to Rocky, but this delicate gem of an album should be music to the ears of anyone who was raised on the Nick Drake school of songwriting. Granted, Rocky is accompanied by a full band on a few of his songs, but even then they're hardly turning their amps up to 11. More like 5, and even that's a generous estimate. Without a doubt, though, Rocky is best when he strips things down to a bare minimum. I know it's become cliché to say this, but at times it really does feel as if he's sitting right next to your bed, quietly strumming his songs. Beautiful. **DF**

**Rumbleseat (No Idea) 7"**— The A-side from this Gainesville band has an Avail-meets-Tom-Waits feel, combining a guttural vocal drawl with strummed acoustic guitars and a harmonica. The B-side is a bit more downtempo, but still contains a pretty strong sense of urgency and loss. It's nice to see an acoustic band that doesn't mind furiously strumming at their guitars rather than just plucking notes here and there. Fans of Bright Eyes take note. On green vinyl with pretty embossed packaging. **DF**

**Romeo is Bleeding "The Principles of Pain" (Plastik Culture) CD-** Romeo offers a French take on a Converge meets Coalesce and has tea with Harkonnen kind of afternoon. Sometimes melodic hardcore is thrown into the fray. This CD contains music, lyrics, and vocals that are well-written, well-rehearsed, well-mixed, and well-produced. Overall a successful record for this overseas ensemble. **AP**

**Rot "Sociopathic Behavior" (Rhetoric) CD-** I still wonder who grindcore bands like this are fooling. What's interesting about rudimentary punk songs that all of the sudden triple their speed, more often than not creating a loud, fast, and jumbled mess? Why should I pay attention to unintelligible lyrics that are sung either in a gruff masculine voice or a high pitched "scary" yell? It would seem to me that the speed and harsh exterior only mask music that is unoriginal and played out. I could have spent the time I listened to this tripe vacuuming dust bunnies with more substance. Avoid at all costs. **JM**

**The Ruby Doe "The Flame and the Fury" (Burnout) CD-** There is nothing more frustrating than listening to a band, knowing they remind you of someone you know, but not being able to figure out who. If you can pinpoint the reference, you can spend the your time hearing just how this band reworks the original band's formula. If you can't figure it out, though, you spend the whole time naming bands and then crossing them off the list. I can say I could imagine this band playing on MTV, as they are playing safe alternative rock, though harder than most. No joke, I bet the lead singer is a dreamboat. In the band's defense, they do know how to rock the angular thing and the start-stop format, and I respect that. But this isn't anything groundbreaking or interesting, and people could spend their time doing something else. **JM**

**Samiam "Astray" (Hopeless) CD-** The problem with Samiam - and don't get me wrong, I like them plenty, in fact they were one of the first bands I ever saw live - is that, after having been around for umpteen years, and outliving any of a great number of similar-sounding bands, they still haven't made it big time. Despite a major-label stint (which bore strange fruit in the shape of the grossly underrated "Clumsy") and a

sound that ought to appeal to anybody who was ever a Jawbreaker fan, they remain a second-tier band in terms of popularity and recognition. Perhaps this is because their sound has changed little over the years; with the exception of slightly slicker production nowadays, "Astray" almost sounds as if it could have been recorded during the band's early years on New Red Archives. The question of whether Samiam's refusal to significantly change their sound is a merit or a fault I will leave for others to decide, but the fact remains that they still lack a catchy single to rocket them into the public eye, and as good as "Astray" is, it's probably not going to win them a lot of new fans. That said, the music here is solid, as solid as ever. It's blisteringly intense, with a thick and well-rounded guitar sound. The singer's howls still send chills up my spine, too. Samiam may be treading water, but at least they chose a good place to go swimming. **DF**

**Saturday Supercade "A Study in Adult Contemporary Punk Rock" (Red Leader) CD-** Do you like Saves the Day, The Get Up Kids, or De La Hoya? If you answered yes to any of these bands, chances are you'll like Saturday Supercade. Saturday Supercade play melodic punk rock in that Drive-Thru sort of way, except the production and layout aren't as quite as slick (Then again these guys don't have MCA records footing the bill for their recording). There isn't really much new going on here, and the lyrics - which try to be political at times - often fall short of the mark. But for the most part, this is just as good as the "bigger" punk bands on corporate radio. Honestly, I can't really get into this type of music anymore, but back when I was in high school (which these kids might still be) I would probably eat this stuff up. Keep an eye out for these guys, because with the right marketing and a bit of luck they could be huge. A pleasant surprise. **JB**

**Screeching Weasel "Teen Punks In Heat" (Panic Button/Lookout) CD-** Yes, it's them. You have to wonder about bands like Screeching Weasel and The Queers - are they content aping the Ramones music, or do they have to attempt to release just as many albums? Catchy fast punk rock with that Beach Boys influence, the nyaah nyaah vocals, "woah woah woah" backups, etc etc etc. Sure it's not bad, sure it's just like the rest of Screeching Weasel's stuff. And if you have to pick an active band that sounds like this, you could do much worse. It's another chapter, same story. At least they didn't name the album after another punk band's lyric like "Television City Dream." **dup**

**Sean Na Na "Return of the Unicorn" (Troubleman Unlimited) CD-** This was one of the only records I got that I was really excited about. Then I listened to it. Now I am less excited. The last Sean Na Na album was kind of frail sounding, pretty raw, but that quality really carried the overall emotion of the record. This is not to accuse the new album of being any less honest, but the richness of the recording seems to contradict the feeling of the voice and lyrics. The missing frailty represents an emergent mismatch between the driving inspiration behind the music, and the sound of the music itself. Regardless, this is a good lightweight indie record, just not what I was hoping for. If you're into the refined



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sound, and/or haven't gotten into Sean Na Na before, give this record a chance. AP

**Second Coming "In Denial Of Our Impermanence" (Breakout) CD-** Pretty good hardcore in the vocal style of Sick Of It All with a solid speedy hardcore backing.

This Northern Cali act reminds me of a less evolved Ensign with a pre-Krishna Ray Cappo on vocals. Snarly, pissed off chunky East Coast hardcore with that treasured rapid delivery. Good stuff, and definitely better than the Straight Edge comp Breakout put out, but nothing revolutionary. I'd like to see them live though. What's up with the Breakout logo of brass knuckles? Independently releasing CDs doesn't make you hard, but it should make you smart. Allegedly. dup

**Selby Tigers "Charm City" (Hopeless) CD-** I really didn't like this CD the first time I listened to it. It's not that I thought it was horrible, it just really didn't do much for me on the first couple of listens. However, I kept listening to it, (mainly because I had to do a story on them for some other magazine-sorry Ross) and something funny happened- all of the sudden, I couldn't stop listening to it. While the male and female alternating vocals easily lend themselves to X comparisons, there is much more going on beneath the Selby Tigers' undeniably catchy harmonies and seventies-style punk onslaught. Everyone in this band sings and writes music, and the various contributions in songwriting definitely add to this band's diversity, and keep this album sounding fresh and interesting from start to finish. I would definitely recommend picking this up, and if you don't like it on the first listen give it another chance- hey, it's not like you have anything better to do. Before I forget, I also enjoyed this album because one of the guys in the band has a mustache like John Waters. Even though all the girls I know tell me differently, I think mustaches are cool, and this particular Selby Tiger has definitely encouraged my secret urge to grow facial hair, whether he knows it or not. Thanks buddy. JB

**Semiautomatic "The Trebuchet" (Vex) CD-** It's hard to describe Semiautomatic's music because their sound is too multifaceted. Is it rock? Is it electronic? Is it trance? Who knows and who cares. When you boil it down, the only thing that will make me buy this record is whether or not their songs are compelling and their music is interesting. Semiautomatic come close to the latter but in the end their insistence on blending every instrument into the mix at the same time ruins this album. Most of the tracks start off promising, but as they build in intensity, they lose coherence and sound like a junk heap of mangled distortion pedals, off-kilter keyboard rants, and obnoxious drum machines. The only thing that saves them is vocalist Akiko's gentle vocal style but the music doesn't sway enough to let her voice break through. It's really a shame because this band would probably sound a lot more palatable if they chose the minimalist route. JBC

**Sergio Vega "The Ray Martin Sessions" (GrapeOS) CD-** Sergio Vega, former bass player for Quicksand and the Deftones, was assisted in the recording of this five-song ep by hardcore heavyweights like Chris Traynor (Orange 9mm, Helmet) and Charlie Garriga (Civ, Outface), but I guess someone must have

slipped happy pills into their burritos when they went to get lunch, because this is hardly the vitriol-fueled explosion of noise one would expect. In fact, Sergio and friends sound almost giddy here, sprinkling their major-key tunes with a liberal amount of organs and blissful falsetto vocals. When he sings "we all recognize the sounds of an old-school beatdown" over a background of handclaps, footstomps, and acoustic guitars, it's hard to tell whether Sergio is mocking or embracing his hardcore past, but it's a good tune either way. This is bouncy indie-pop, alright, but it's indie-pop at its finest, and I'm glad to see that Sergio has no qualms about breaking down his own musical boundaries. DF

**Shutdown "Few And Far Between" (Victory) CD-** Just like the last reviewer who handled a Shutdown record, I too think they're a decent band with a singer who doesn't quite fit. It's a shame too, since Mark Scodotto is such a nice guy. Musically, it's a good progression of their sound, gradually infusing more modern aspects to classic NYHC styles. Roger Miret produced this album, so that sound is very pronounced and the songs are nicely pieced together. I haven't seen them in a long time, but it seems like they have a good fanbase and probably turn it out live. Tracks like "Within Our Reach" do a very good job of shaping a furious track around Mark's vocals. I think there's a thickness, a more organic feel to this record that fits the vocals far better than before. Bonus points for the Warzone cover. It's nice to hear good speedy hardcore from NY, and for that Shutdown certainly deliver. dup

**Sick of it All "Yours Truly" (Fat Wreck) CD-** In the world of hardcore there are the one-hit wonders and there are the institutions. Possibly even more than in mainstream rock and roll hardcore is a genre filled with one or two good records from most good bands followed promptly by a much publicized break-up. Without a regular pay-check or other such incentives to keep great bands going, it's quite hard for most hardcore bands to remain committed for more than a short time. You all know that. And, you all know that Sick of it All remains firmly on the side of hardcore institutions. After starting out in the late 80s New York City second wave hardcore scene, trying the major label thing, and finally finding themselves unscathed on Fat Wreck-releasing a great record a few years ago called "Call to Arms." Back is the always impressive Sick of it All with a not so impressive album. I don't mean it's bad by hardcore standards, because the bar for New York hardcore seems to be pretty damn low right now. Instead, SOIA bring us a record that might be the best some bands could muster. But, they trade in much of their aggression from past records for a bit more melody and rhythmic focus. It's good stuff but there aren't really any songs here that I will be humming after the disc is over-like I did with their previous efforts. So, if you're a diehard fan, then you probably already have this. But, if you're new to the institution I'd stick with "Scratch the Surface" or the last record. RS

**Sig Transit Gloria "2>8>2000" (Johanns Face) CD-** Good melodic "once-was-emo" pop rock in the Get Up Kids style. Ya got your sugary backup vocals, some keyboard action and driving guitars. Updated early 80's new wave pop with a touch of the indie brush. Yeah,

it's not nuclear fission but you know if you like it or not, as the bio nicely states. Now imagine if all the indie pop acts were all over Top 40 instead of Christina Aguilera and Britney Spears. See what difference an ounce of integrity makes? 5 worthwhile pop tunes from this Chicago-area crew. dup

**Silkworm "Lifestyle" (Touch and Go) CD-** It's very rare - in fact, it's practically unheard of - for a press sheet to undersell a band, but here's an exception to the rule. Touch and Go's press sheet for this perpetually obscure indie band seems to imply that perhaps they're treading water musically, but nothing could be further from the truth. Granted, Silkworm certainly aren't peppering their songs with theramins or African chants or anything like that, but "Lifestyle" is a beautifully crafted rock album, a beautiful companion piece to Pavement's "Slanted and Enchanted." Steven Malkamus comparisons may be inevitable, especially because "Lifestyle" is a bit less perverse and a bit less accessible than Silkworm's earlier work (don't be surprised if their song "Treat the New Guy Right" starts showing up on the radio pretty soon), but Silkworm do, indeed, have a sound of their own. I still remember meeting a guy at a party a few years ago who couldn't stop raving about how much he loved Silkworm. I was pretty skeptical at the time, but this album has won me over. Definitely a keeper. DF

**Silo The Huskie (Headhunter/Cargo Music) CD-** I like this. Silo the Huskie (named after a dog nearly killed by the band on the way to practice) has sort of a Built to Spill/Wilco alt-rock thing goin' on, with a healthy dose of country twang. I found it kind of strange that this is on a label better known for releasing classic 7 seconds LP's, but hey who listens to the new 7 Seconds stuff anyway? If you like the alt-country stuff like Uncle Tupelo or Billy Bragg and Wilco's amazing "Mermaid Avenue Sessions," this is a solid investment for your collection. Surprisingly, this is also the 3rd record in a row that I've reviewed that has the word "Ohio" in a song title. Could this be some type of subliminal coding from my mom for me to call home? I don't even (BUY THIS) think that subliminal (BUY THIS) messages work. (BUY THIS) What do you think? (BUY THIS) I was really impressed by this album, (BUY THIS) and keep an eye out (BUY THIS) for these Huskies. JB

**Sinkhole "Retrospectacles" (Dr. Strange) CD-** Sinkhole was a Massachusetts melodic punk act that broke up about 3 years ago. Doc Hopper's Chris Pierce was in this act, and Stephen Wardlaw from the Marshes recorded a bunch of the previously unreleased tracks here, of which there are 7. Also, 12 songs are from their three albums. They do some interesting time changes and effects, but the sound is mostly well-done rocky punk with mellow vocals. If you appreciate Plow United, The Marshes, Doc Hopper or Weston, you'll need to check out Sinkhole. These acts all comprised what was probably the last innovative wave of pop punk, and that was about 5 years ago. dup

**Sit n' Spin "Enjoy the Ride" (Cargo) CD-** I like that this does not fit into any of the girl band stereotypes that are around these days. This isn't cutesy, it isn't overbearingly aggressive, and it's thankfully not in that singer/songwriter vein. What we have here is countrified punk rock with some surf influences showing up every now and then. This is fun in a "pick your teeth" instead of

"curtsey" way, but it never gets scary (like, L7 territory). This is worth a spin or two. JM

**Sommerest "More Songs" (Kaufey/Get up & go!) CD-** This band is not to be mistaken with the Sommerest from Pennsylvania-these guys are the real deal. Raw driving punk rock from New Zealand, with more hooks than a pirate convention. The scratchy vocals and palm muted guitars border a bit too close to Hot Water Music territory at some points, but other songs sound nothing like HWM. In fact the song "Sleepless" could be easily mistaken for a Lifetime B-side (Albeit Lifetime on a tight recording budget). 12 songs plus a three song EP tacked on makes this CD definitely worth the ten bucks or so that you'd pay for this. I hope that this band gets the opportunity to tour the states because if this album is any indication of their live show it should be pretty impressive. A pleasant surprise. JB

**Spazz/25 Ta Life (Edison) 7"-** Can anyone please tell me how 25 Ta Life has survived this long and still sell a decent amount of records? I would think people would be turned off by the bad and unbelievably dumb hardcore metal; not to mention the lead singer being called "Dirty Rick". Granted, maybe no one complains because they can't understand a word he's saying, but one needs only look at the lyrics sheet for confirmation. Spazz, on the other hand, are not without some charm. We're talking super quick songs that are also super fast, which is good for those of us with a short attention span. Unfortunately, the crazy metal hardcore thing gets old after a song of two, which makes a 7" the perfect length. I guess the nicest thing I have to say is that the layout is beautiful and I like the brown vinyl. JM

**Speedbuggy USA "Cowboys & Aliens" (Cargo) CD-** Country music definitely gets a bad rap in the punk community. In fact, just saying the word "country" can evoke a grimace on any young hipster's face. I bet when you just read the word "country" you grimaced. Don't lie. While a majority of country (or any other musical genre for that matter) is crap, there is still plenty of good stuff country stuff out there. Face it, Johnny Cash is way more of a rebel than Anti-Flag or any of today's punk icons, and I'll be the first to admit that Willie Nelson's "Stardust" LP is a classic rock n' roll record in every sense of the term. But can country fit into a punk rock context? If you had asked me before I had heard of Speedbuggy USA I would have seriously had my doubts. And as crazy as it sounds, these guys not only proved it can work, but can sound great. These guys combine the chops of seasoned country session players, with the heart and energy of raw punk rockers. From slide to steel string guitar, and straight up chicken pickin', these guys have the country thing down to a science. How they write these songs is a complete mystery to me, but I just hope they don't stop. Still don't think these guys are legit? They have an ex-member of NOFX, just try to get more punk credibility than that. It's a relief to see a talented punk band trying something new and innovative, and I commend Speedbuggy USA for taking a chance in the often closed-minded punk community. Speedbuggy USA might not be for everybody, but it sure works for me. JB

**Standfast/Our Time (In Dreams) 7"-** Our



# Track Attack

Time sound like we are intruding on a rehearsal where the band is still trying to piece together some songs. "We've got the hardcore part, we've got the punk part, we've got the melodic/emo part, now how are we going to put this all together?" As a result, the songs sound confused and unfinished. Maybe next time. Standfast have got their act together, rocking out the crazy hardcore jams that get all the East Coast kids dancing and singing. There is an emphasis on melody here that is lost in tough guy hardcore that makes it sound vital. These guys could be huge (they probably are, which illustrates how out of touch I am). **JM**

**Still Dreadful "Lucky Fuckerz" (El Pocho Loco/Voodoo) CD-** Seriously, the name says it all. I'm sorry Ross and Jonah, but I cannot listen to this. It's like, if you can admit that you're still dreadful, why not work on getting better instead of just continuing to suck? **AP**

**The Story So Far "When Fortune Smiled" (Hopeless) CD-** We're not breaking any new ground here, but I guess that's not the point, is it? The Story So Far guys play upbeat melodic punk that sounds a LOT like Digger. Once in a while they even stray into a slower rhythmic parts with Hot Water style vocals (Wow, that's original). I'll admit these guys are tight and proficient at what they are doing and every once in a while they come up with something catchy. The big problem here is that there are just too many bands doing this type of stuff better. The Alkaline Trio and Dillinger 4 instantly come to mind. The Story So Far also sounds a lot like another punk band.... I can't seem to think of their name right now. Hey, does it really matter? Is anyone going to buy this record based on the mediocre review so far? Probably not. Therefore I'm going to stop racking my brain and end this. **JB**

**Strike Anywhere "Chorus of One" (Red Leader) CDep-** I think this is the first time I've recieved the same CD by two different labels in the same issue. Anyways, punk and hardcore in the days post-Fugazi, post-Minor Threat, post-Avail is not about who can come up with the most original or way-out tune. Rather, it is about who can recycle old ideas and musical phrases and make them sound interesting and fresh again. No one is expecting punk bands to recreate the wheel, rather just make that wheel run a bit smoother. Some would find this idea detestable. I, however, do not. I think bands like Strike Anywhere are very very good. They play music in the typical Richmond, VA way that precursors of the sound like Avail, Inquisition, and Four Walls Falling laid down for us in the early '90s, and make it sound just as exciting as any of those bands ever did at their peak. Strike Anywhere play melodic, politically charged hardcore that no doubt about it, hands down fucking rocks. Listen to the shout out choruses on the 7th track or the breakdown on the 6th song and the absolute best songs of Avail and Lifetime are called to mind. These guys have a way of playing that is honest, fun, and makes me upset that I missed these dudes when they opened for Hot Water Music a few weeks ago. This is great. And, again, this band is not re-inventing the wheel. Instead, they simply make a better damn truck. Look really hard for this. **RS**

**The Stryder "Masquerade in the Key of Crime" (Equal Vision) CD-** This CD is

destined, in my opinion, to become as much of a classic as anything Lifetime or the Getup Kids have ever released. Although they're part of the same cadre of bands as This Years Model and the 65 Film Show (both of whom have released records through Law of Inertia), the Stryder stand out from their contemporaries in that their songs are remarkably catchy and well-played. Hardcore and indie kids alike should love this. I certainly know that I do. **DF**

**Strung Out "The Element of Sonic Defiance" (Fat Wreck) CD-** What the hell happened to Strung Out? Somewhere along the line they transformed from an ultra-tight melodic punk into a somewhat generic hardcore band. The last time I saw these guys I had the feeling the new stuff wasn't going to be so hot, but I couldn't imagine that it would be this wretched. If you think I'm being overly harsh it's because their album "Suburban Teenage Wasteland Blues" was one of my favorite early punk records and the energy and musicianship of that album has been surpassed by few. But here even the occasional galloping drum parts are kept to a mid-tempo and the generic hardcore guitar riffs are something I thought that this band was beyond. Like labelmates Good Riddance it seems this band has lost sight of the aspects which made their music memorable and have forsaken it for the latest trend in metal-hardcore. Hopefully these guys can rebound on their next release or this could be the last nail in the coffin of what could have been a great punk band. **JB**

**Sunday's Best "Poised to break" (Polyvinyl) CD-** Boy, have I caught a lot of shit for liking this band (especially from Ross). It seems every time I mention that I like Sunday's Best, I'm met with scowls and insults. I'm sure of one thing; this record is not going to help my case. I'll be the first to admit that I was a little bit disappointed by this album. The opening track, "The Hardest Part" sounds exactly like the Police (especially the vocals) which instantly caught me off guard. The rest of the record didn't foster much of a reaction at all...it all just sort of blended together. Not that the songs on this record are bad, they just aren't very memorable. One exception is "Winter-owned," their best song yet, which was also available on their last seven inch. I hope that these guys can pull it together for their next release and prove that they can write some truly moving songs or they're going to lose my support. That's something that no band can afford. **JB**

**Swingin' Utters (Fat) CD-** As big as this band is, their only really memorable release for me is their first. Maybe it was more of a time and a place instead of the actual album, but this band is still very good. While still reflecting their "American version of Stiff Little Fingers" image, SU pack a lot of sturdy rock & roll into the mix. The result is a sound that has plenty of the power that the kids like and yet will hold up sonically enough to listen to this in 10 years time. Mature stuff from this SF powerhouse, well worth your money if you like it tough and melodic. Grown-up street punk manages to maintain its anthemic feel and the result here is stunning. **dup**

**Synthetic 16 "Your Water" (Resurrection A.D.) CD-** Here is a band that sounds good. Their music is well produced, well rehearsed, and downright agreeable. Their layout is sen-

sible and tight. This is a band that all emo bands could learn a lesson from. In fact, I've been told that this band has had powerful influence on Jimmy Eat World, Texas is the Reason, and the Juliana Theory. It is just chance that this album did not come out until after all of those other bands got famous and recorded two records apiece. How did this happen, you ask? I simply do not know. **AP**

**Sysral "Black Smoker" (Edison) CD-** Seeing that this in on the Very distro in-house label concerns me. I've never heard their previous releases, but all their ads touting acts like Acme as the most brutal, hard, savage so-and-so already tells me that I'm in for something I might not be ready for. Well, I was ready for this. Swallow-the-microphone Cannibal Corpse growling set to sped-up metal licks that amount to nothing. The music is unremarkable as a bed for the vocals and lacks dynamics in a big way. Whatever energy there was here is lost in the smoke and mirrors of the show. If this is the future of hardcore, I'm going to start going to raves. Oh wait, I do that already. See what I mean? **dup**

**Teenbeaters "My World, My Sky" (Teenbeaters) CD-** My intuition is telling me that I shouldn't like this album - too polished, too alt-rock, too faux-despairing - but you know what? Against my better judgment, I keep listening to this over and over. Singer Zambia Greene's tales of urban squalor, set in the streets and bars of New York City, are backed up by squalls of minor-chord guitars and layered with level after level of distortion. But the melodies of songs like "Lotti Di" and "No One Knows" are so damn infectious that you're willing to disregard the fact that there's no way these guys' lives' can possibly be as dark and scandalous as they'd have you believe. **DF**

**Throwdown "Drive me Dead" (Indecision) CD-** Is straightedge dead? I'm wondering that seriously. Perhaps it's because all the straightedge kids that I meet are just as bone-headed as those not drug-free, and because the music isn't pushing nearly as many boundaries as it used to. Instead we get cheap, second rate clones of the '88 style stuff or Hatebreed. Here we have the latter. Let's be honest, Throwdown play some pretty sick, battering hardcore, so battering that some of the songs simply sound like banging. One has trouble wading through the wall of guitar crunch—something I'm sure sounded great in the studio, and perhaps live as well—and a drummer who simply bangs. I imagine kids go fucking nuts to this stuff live where their ears are too overwhelmed to hear that this sounds like every other heavy-as-fuck-hardcore band out there, or they cannot discern the lyrics for themselves. Let me tell you about the lyrics: I'm down with straightedge and I'm quite happy to hear about drug-free pride, but this kind of trivial hardcore makes their message hard to take seriously. Listen to this: "Broken down, grab ahold of my hand. Cleanse yourself. Now set yourself free. Broken, self-defeated, lost. You've got to give yourself some discipline, raise your fist in the air, drug free." What are they, born again Christians? Keep your religion out of my hardcore. Oh wait, I didn't see their atheist song, "Sinner." Sorry guys. **RS**

**The Thumbs "All Lesser Devils" (Adeline) CDep-** What? This can't be right. Punk from DC? Who the hell wrote this? Doesn't the idiot that composed this abomination of a press-sheet know that punk rock—in it's most commonly used

meaning—does not exist in DC? Yeah, right. Next thing you know Fugazi will break up and all the members will go off and sign to Epitaph. Okay, let's just say for the sake of argument that this band is from Washington DC. Just for kicks let's imagine that that bastion of indie-rock creativity reverted back to a time when the power-chord was the apex of talent for even the most skilled DC musician, screamy vocals were still considered cool, palm-muting was a method most preferred by guitarists for breakdowns, and drums had two dynamics: loud and real loud. Unfortunately, that time is no longer in our nation's capitol. I imagine the kids in DC don't know what to make of this. I mean, Billie Joe from Green Day owns the label that released this CD, and to the best of my knowledge "Dookie" failed to find acceptance in even DC's mall culture. Therefore, knowing what I know about the town that produces the Dischord sound *en masse*, I'd have to say this is way out of place. And, this is really really damn good. Then again, what does a town that doesn't even have a congressperson know about music anyway (awesome Smith cover by the way)? **RS**

**Til Seven Years Pass Over Him "My Last Action" CDep-** A few demos from this relatively quiet Cali emo act. Sound quality is pretty decent and they let loose a bit of the rock over the layered vocals once in a while. The 'new' version of the title track (there are 2) is pretty melancholic as is the rest of the stuff here. It's sad without being too wailing and it doesn't get all that monotonous as the choruses usually break things up well. Interestingly, there is a Juno keyboard and a violin somewhere in the mix here, but I can't find them. Don't approach if you think emo can get sappy. **dup**

**Trans Am "Red Line" (Thrill Jockey) CD-** I went through a lot of emotions while listening to this CD. Well, maybe only two: interest and disinterest. Tee hee. Maybe it was the breadth of the CD: songs ran the gambit from minimal sound experiments to acoustic wandering to weird almost Nine Inch Nails-like post rock. That's a lot to try and digest at one time. The main problem was what I like to call the Alice In Chains syndrome: the band had my interest, I was close to being hooked, and then they would throw in some aspect (big or small) and mess it all up. With Alice in Chains, it was the singer (ugh); that and they weren't very good. With Trans Am, it's many things: they would get a nice groove going and then the drums would come in too strong and ruin it. Or they would follow up a rather interesting minimal electronic piece with some bass heavy rock song (for lack of better phrase). The main point being that this was too across the board to really get a handle on. These guys are talented, but I think this will go in the "Almost" pile. **JM**

**The Trans Megetti "Soon Be Seeing you Later" (Art Monk) CDep-** Where the heck has this band been? I don't think Jersey City's finest has appeared on my radar for years. I was a big fan of their last full length on Art Monk—by the way, who knew that Art Monk was still putting out records?—as it combined a very frenetic Fugazi vibe with vocals that did much to recall Robert Smith of the Cure. So here they are, back in black or what have you. I have to say, these 4 songs are pretty



# Track Attack

The LOI Review Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS      Dan Frantic: DF  
du proserpio: dup      Jonah Bayer: JB  
Jonah Brucker-Cohen: JBC

Jason Murphy: JM  
Adam Parks: AP

solid: mediocre recording quality, danceable beats, and Rye Coalition-esque instrumentation. It's good, but I have to say my attention has moved on. Perhaps if they had released this ep 3 years ago I would have been a loyal follower of the Trans Megetti. Now, I think this may be a case of too little too late. Again, very good stuff, but I don't know if the music is as poignant now as it was then. I'll wait for a full length. RS

**Tristeza "Dream Signals in Full Circles" (Tiger Style) CD-** Who else feels like slipping between the covers with a nice cup of tea and a great book when listening to Tristeza? I'm sure a lot of you out there do, because let's be honest: Tristeza doesn't exactly make you want to mosh. I think that "Where you Been" by Dinosaur Jr. and anything by the Drop 19s are probably right up there with this record as my favorite fall-asleep records of all time. No, not boogie-down or wild-sex music, but fall asleep music. I'm sure that's not the kind of vibe these guys were going for when they recorded the thing, 'cause no one wants to pay 7 bucks to see a band then fall asleep, but hey some nights I would pay a full 10 bucks to have serenity like this when I head off to slumberland. One of the few records I've heard in some time that falls closer to the genre of "simply beautiful" than to "bad emo". RS

**Try.Fail.Try "We Deal In Lives" (Your Best Guess/9Volt) CDep-** Superfast hardcore action from Edison NJ. Smart positive vocals, tough technical playing and, did I say fast fast fast? This makes me happy, since it's really hardcore and it doesn't sound like it's from 1988. There are some cool slow parts but the pace here is rapid and hard. One of the best hardcore records I've heard in a long time. Anyone with as honest a mission statement in the insert is OK by me. This was apparently a 7" on 9Volt originally. Get this. dup

**Turning Point "1988-1991" (Jade Tree) CD-** Hmmm, why would Jade Tree release the discography of a little-known (currently) '88 style hardcore band? I'm really not sure to tell the truth. I mean, Jade Tree has a history with hardcore, and obviously they're not afraid to show it. They've released record by Swiz, Lifetime, Kid Dynamite, Four Walls Falling, and even Damnation AD. But, all of that stuff is better and more interesting than this. I mean, I like hardcore as much as the next guy, but Damnation AD had fucking guts, what Swiz did to fuse the DC sound with hardcore is unrivaled, and Lifetime just plain rocked. Plus those bands were still together when their records were released. So the Turning Point question remains unsolved. Honestly this is a lot better than most of the Gorilla Biscuits rip-off bands from '88 (which were really just Minor Threat and 7 Seconds rip-offs themselves). The first few tracks bring Ashes to mind, while the further and further into the CD we get (with progressively worse sound quality) the more it sounds like Bold. I guess there are some of you out there who gobble up all things Jade Tree, in which case you probably already have this disc. But if you tend to lean towards the Revelation Records side of the spectrum then you may like this. I however, find the whole style a bit silly nowadays. Oh yeah, why does every hardcore band from way-back-when feel the need to write a song where the chorus is simply the name of their band name shouted out amidst

gang vocals? RS

**Twelve Tribes "Instruments" (Eulogy) CDep-** Okay kids, I'm getting bored. All it takes these days is musical competency and some dropped-D crunch for a band to put out a CD on a respectable label. Not many people are paying attention to whether or not that band actually has original songs to go with their 32nd notes and blast beats. Nope, that doesn't matter. Just as long as they're tight and energetic. And, to Twelve Tribes' credit, I'm sure they're a fucking powder-keg while on stage. However, on record they are not much more than a second rate Poison the Well. I mean, that pause in the song "Dragon Flies" says it all without words: for about 4 measures all you hear is the bass drum beating super-fast. I wish you could hear it, that part is almost so gratuitous-it's downright silly. A lot of this record sounds like they had a few cool riffs but no where to put them. So, instead of composing cohesive song structures with riffs that all made sense next to each other, they decided to just compose songs piecemeal from all the spare riffs they had lying around the practice space. The end result is a lot of banging-- proficient banging at that-- but it's all the same to me. There's potential here, so let's give it time. (wait, is this sleeve UV coated?) RS

**Two Finger Point (So Good) CDep-** What a great name for a record label. I'm really into all these labels that pump themselves in their names. It's like, "Just in case you've never heard of this band our label is 'so good' so don't worry you'll like this CD." Now that I think about it, a lot of labels do the same thing: Better Looking, Cool Guy, Lovitt, Victory, Better Youth Organization (BYO), Too Damn Hype, etc. Then there's all the death references in label names too: Eulogy, Relapse, Epitaph, Resurrection AD, etc. This is fun! Let's do labels that all proclaim how bad they are in their names: Hopeless, No Idea, Dr. Strange. Now clueless: Undecided, Indecision. Okay, now how poor they are: Vagrant, Fueled by Raman, Mag Wheel, Slowtime (are these a stretch?). Okay the band now: good in a Rites of Spring meets Van Pelt way, if you see that. Given a bigger recording budget and some more experience playing they could be very good. Lots of potential. Plus, I'm pleasantly surprised to see that they're not a youth-crew hardcore band, as I would have guessed from their name. But, as we've just seen, a name can be deceiving. I think they should change their name to "We're a Ten Out of Ten." How's that for vindication? RS

**Until The End (Equal Vision) CDep-** EVR manages to get a nod of respect for maintaining a few openly straightedge acts in their roster and not being as transparent as a label like Crucial Response. UTE apparently formed because "the scene wasn't positive enough." I guess the whole Project X/SXE-kick-the-scene-in-the-ass move remains popular over 10 years later. X-members of Poison The Well, Morning Again and Where Fear And Weapons.... I'm all for SXE bands, but their 'purpose' is more likely to hurt them than help them when they try to move beyond songs about drugs and betrayal. But I guess it's good enough for some. Musically it's very metallic stuff, with 2 guttural vocalists and super technical drums. Oh, and H20 fans- they had a tattooist do old-time drawings for the album art. Yawn. dup

**The Vandals "Look What I Almost Stepped In" (Nitro) CD-** The Vandals are like the Adam Sandler of the punk world. Year in and year out, they steadfastly refuse to grow up even the slightest bit, choosing instead to snub their noses at anyone and everything they see. And despite the fact that they're obviously one-trick ponies, they keep doing it again and again and in spite of themselves they keep churning out music that, stupid and infantile as it may be, is nonetheless a tremendously guilty pleasure. If their last album, "Hitler Bad, Vandals Good," was the Vandals' version of "Big Daddy," then "Look What I Almost Stepped In" is like "Billy Madison." Totally stupid, full of poo-poo ca-ca jokes, and eminently re-listenable. And, as usual, the musicianship is top-notch, as the Vandals prove once again that their stop-on-a-dime guitars and bouncing-off-the-wall vocals are of a caliber that bands like Guttermouth can only dream about. As Mr. Sandler asks his nemesis in "Happy Gilmore," "you eat shit for breakfast?" Well, yeah. I'm eating this shit up like candy. DF

**V/A "Might As Well... Can't Dance" (Adeline) CD-** Interesting comp with bands that, for the most part, aren't on the label (as far as I can tell). Naturally, the poppy punk vibe that the label is known for is well repped here by Dillinger Four, Common Rider, Pinhead Gunpowder and so on. Notables include the interesting "arty" arrangement by Lifter Puller, the Milo-esque vocals of Enemies, the Influents' old-style rock ballad, Free Beer sounds like DI- all dramatic and LA sounding, and the always great Samiam. All tracks are unavailable elsewhere, as usual. Not earthshaking, but might be worth it if you can pick this up cheap. dup

**V/A "Straight Edge: Rise Of A New Era" (Breakout) CD-** I always feel the need to explore compilations like this. Most records like this are tossed out by labels with crossed fingers, hoping to hit upon the same success of scene documentation as, say, Revelation's "New York Hardcore." I might be an obvious fan of older hardcore, but by track 4 I'm already let down by the heavy production, overly coarse vocals and a lack of fresh energy. Maybe I'm just getting old, but if this is the new era, it sure hasn't changed much since 1994. Are today's straight-edge kids so darkly disturbed that they need to write such tortured material and give their bands 'intimidating' names? This is some bleak shit for kids who are allegedly proud of themselves. Some passing interest courtesy of: Rely, Burden, Show Of Hands and Trial. This is what remains of straight edge bands? No wonder Ian MacKaye is so bitchy. dup

**V/A "I Guess This is Goodbye: The Emo Diaries" (Deep Elm) CD-** There are two ways to look at the new chapter of the now famous Emo Diaries compilations-- which is made up of relatively unknown bands this time around. In fact, I was a bit taken aback when I barely recognized any names on the sleeve, in relation previous to earlier "chapters" (does anyone else feel stupid calling a record a "chapter?") which featured artists like Jimmy Eat World and Samiam. The first way to look at it is: "Hey, deep elm wants to help aspiring bands by putting them on a compilation with national distribution." I'm assuming that this is partly true. The other way is "Hey, Deep Elm can't get any bands on a comp that is about three "chapters" too long already, so they're just throwing together a bunch of bands that no one ever heard of. I'm assuming the latter is closer to the mark. But that's not to say

that there aren't a few gems and surprises on here. Standouts include The White Octave, Sunfactor, and Eniac. They even break out of the emo "mold" on a few songs, most drastically on a song by Cast Aside which is equal parts screaming and is singing. While it's nice to see some new bands get their music out, I tend to question the motives behind this comp and wonder when Deep Elm will realize that The Emo Diaries have run their course and they desperately need to write a "final chapter" already. JB

**V/A "Rock 'n' Roll Au Go-Go!" (Devil Doll) CD-** Ugh, here we go again. I think people claim that "rock 'n' roll is dead" so they can follow up the statement with how "so-and-so reinvented rock 'n' roll." Let's face the facts: rock and roll (I hate apostrophes around the n, unless we're discussing Guns 'n' Roses) is not dead, nor will it die; it will go through many permutations and changes, maybe ending up miles from where it started, but it won't die. Even if rock and roll had died, it would not be brought back by bad garage and punk rock. The press release also discusses how the bands have taken their influences and created something else from the sum of all of them; funny, all I hear are bad knock-offs. I don't mean to be such a snot, but the press release refers to the sounds I just suffered through as "the New Rock Revolution!" C'mon, such ridiculous statements cannot be tolerated. Oh, and don't worry about the names of the bands, you'll never hear of them, hopefully. JM

**V/A "Grease: the Not So Original Soundtrack" (Dummyup) CD-** Punk rock's collective memory seems to be getting shorter and shorter. Doesn't anybody remember that a few years ago, Less Than Jake released an album called "Greased" consisting entirely of songs from the so-bad-you-loved-it film of the same name? I'm not the world's biggest LTJ fan, but they did a perfectly competent job with the idea, and as far as I'm concerned they certainly took the gimmick to its logical limit. So there's not a whole lot of a point in assembling twenty-odd punk bands, most of whom are worse than LTJ, to cover the whole damn thing again. Granted, there are a couple songs here that didn't make it onto "Greased," but that's not much of a selling point, particularly when you take into consideration the fact that they're not very good songs. Even bands that I normally like, like J-Church or Atom and his Package, don't come across very well. Pass on this one. DF

**V/A "Punk O Rama #5" (Epitaph) CD-** You know, it's been god knows how many years since I started reviewing records from punk rock stalwarts Epitaph, and I still don't quite get that label. They've put out some of the best punk records I've ever heard, and they've also produced some of the worst dreck ever to be committed to vinyl. And each year, their "Punk O Rama" compilation is sort of like a musical state of the union address that allows the listener to discern what gems and what garbage Epitaph has released in the past 12 months. As usual, there's plenty of both on this 28-song compilation. There's lots of the usual generic stuff from the usual generic skatepunk bands (I won't name names, but you know the bands I'm talking about), but there are some good songs, mostly from newer additions to Epitaph's roster; the



# Track Attack

(International) Noise Conspiracy, Vision, Dwarves, Refused, Bombshell Rocks, and the Dropkick Murphys put in the best performances this time around. **DF**

**V/A "Equal Vision Records Label Sampler" (Equal Vision) CD-** Hmmm, a first for EVR, who usually contribute to the Revelation samplers. I guess that explains why they document real old releases such as Project Kate, Man Will Surrender, Copper and so on. Oh, wait, I get it. Instead of promoting new releases like most samplers, this is EVR #50. So, instead, for their first sampler EVR has released a comp to show where they've been instead of only where they're going. And they take it back to the 108 EP! This is undoubtedly a good place to start if you don't know anything about the label. New stuff includes the super-poppy Saves The Day and The Stryder and the hardcore soap opera of Albany NY- One King Down. But the beauty part is- old Refused, Converge and Bane; the flash-in-the-pan Krishna action of Prema, Copper and Project Kate; the neo-youth crew of Ten Yard Fight, Floorpunch and Hands Tied; the severe Trial and the 'sorta emo' of early Shift and a pre-Revolution Man Will Surrender. Wait, hold it now- EVR started off putting out Shelter 7's and has amassed a great roster of what happened in hardcore since 1991. Bravo, Steve. **dup**

**V/A "Punk Goes Metal" (Fearless) CD-** I cannot help but wish to cause Ross personal bodily harm because I told him specifically that I hate comps, that I even believe there should be a moratorium on comps, and two weeks later he brings me seven comps. And one of them is this piece of crap. This is mediocre pop-punk bands covering (for the most part) great 80s songs. Here are three things that are wrong with this concept: 1) Covering 80s songs is played out. 2) They already made this comp with emo bands covering the 80s songs. 3) I hate pop-punk. So that you can get a feel for what you are missing: AFI covers G n' R, Newfound Glory takes Warrant, the Ataris get Skid Row, and the best song is Bigwig doing Slayer. You are not missing anything. **AP**

**V/A "Hopelessly Devoted To You Vol.3" (Hopeless) CD-** Chances are you're either a fan of the Hopeless roster or not by now, and while I'm not crazy about all of these bands, it's hard to deny the improvements that this label has made in the last year or two. Honestly, this comp is worth the four bucks strictly for the kick-ass unreleased Dillinger Four track "Our Science is Tight." Other standouts include The Weakerthans, Samiam, Digger, and the Selby Tigers. Sure, you have to suffer through the ska and horns of Mustard Plug, Joe Queer complaining about fifteen year old punk kids (Hey Joe, you probably shouldn't make fun of your target audience-just a tip), and the monstrosity which has become Fifteen-but that's what the skip button on the CD player is for, right? Overall, I think this is one of the better punk comps out today, and the good bands definitely outweigh the bad. Forget Punk-O-Rama 19, support real independent punk rock and buy this instead of another studded bracelet at Hot Topic. **JB**

**V/A "Jade Tree: First Five Years" (Jade Tree) Double CD-** It's fairly easy to name most of

the independent record labels that earned a devoted following for themselves and changed the face of underground music in the 80's and 90's; mention a label like Dischord, Touch & Go, or even Revelation and it will instantly evoke a panoply of sounds and images in any self-respecting indie rocker's mind. Now that we've entered into a new decade, it will be interesting to see which labels establish themselves not only by enabling quality bands to release records but also as icons, as members of a stylistic vanguard that is instrumental in shaping the face of contemporary music. I would argue that just as fans and rock critics paid plenty of lip service to the "Dischord sound" in the 90's, people will soon be talking about the "Jade Tree sound," if they haven't started doing so already. This is not to say that every band sounds alike, of course. Nor is it to say that everything they've put out has been golden (I'll be happy if I never have to hear Sweetbelly Freakdown again). But Jade Tree nonetheless seems to be a forward-thinking label with a stable of artists whose sounds compliment, rather than mirror, each other. Now that the label is taking off, it is only natural that it should put out a two-disc retrospective cataloging all the early 7" singles it released between 1990 and 1995, most of which are currently out of print or very difficult to find. For me, the most surprising thing about hearing this collection (all of which, with the exception of one Eggs 7", was new to my ears) is the musical coherence that Jade Tree showed even in its infancy - I would expect most labels' early releases to be fraught with mishaps or at least radically divergent from their later releases, but most of the records here wouldn't make me do a double-take even if they were released on Jade Tree today. Not everything here is mind-blowing, but it's great to hear Gravel doing a shoegazer-style cover of "The Wolf," or Jones Very playing full-on emo before the word "emo" even existed, or Pitchblende fucking things up Unwound-style. All in all, this compilation shows itself to be an auspicious beginning to an ever-improving label. **DF**

**V/A "Read Army Faction" (No Idea/AK Press) 7"-** More of a sampler 7" than a collaboration in its own right, this benefit for AK Press (an anarchist/leftist book publisher that has put out writings and audio CD's by, among others, Mumia Abu-Jamal and Howard Zinn) culls four tracks from the full-length "Return of the Read Menace" CD that was released on Honest Don's about a year ago. One the one hand, I can't really complain because I'm a big supporter of AK Press, and I'm inclined to support anything that helps them continue to get their often-unpopular views out the public. On the other hand, the four songs here (Hot Water Music, Avail, Discount, the Weakerthans) all appear elsewhere - on the same CD, no less! - so I'm disappointed that there is no new material to speak of here. And while the songs are perfectly good (the Weakerthans would have to be my favorite), there are even better ones to be found on the CD. Where's Atom & His Package? **DF**

**V/A "The Dynamite Rose" (Shotdownstars) 7"-** This is an odd record, as it is dedicated to a couple that was married earlier this year. I don't know how many weddings have Atom and His Package playing at them, but maybe it's time that they start. Anyway, this is a great little comp that is too short for a flow

to be established, meaning that it's all right in my book. And with standout tracks by Good Clean Fun, the already mentioned Atom, and The '65 Filmshow, you can't go wrong. There's something for everyone; maybe you should give this to the next friend of yours who gets married. He or she will probably ask why you got such a lame present, but then you can laugh and run. **JM**

**V/A "World Warped III Live" (SideOneDummy) CD-** The third accompaniment to the biggest tour in punk rock. I guess it'd be easier to dislike the whole thing if they didn't do a decent job of mixing up the bands every year. Anyway, who could say anything bad about Vans? Good stuff- Dropkick Murphys opening "Barroom Hero", 7 Seconds, Bosstones with a great older song, NOFX, Long Beach Dub Allstars, Hot Water Music, Amazing Crowns, Flogging Molly, Lunachicks, Bad Religion. Bad stuff- Unwritten Law, Less Than Jake, MXPX, GOB, Royal Crown Revue, Blink 182, The Line. This might be a worthwhile buy if you're like me and hate outdoor festivals. All the tracks are from various different shows and albums (not from the Warped tour). **dup**

**V/A "Significantly Live" (Significant) CD-** From the small FL label, Significant, comes this little revelation of a comp. Whereas the layout is about as minimal as possible, the content is colossal. This is a collection of off-the-board live tapes of some of the more notable acts in hardcore between the late 80s and mid 90s. The few non-recognizable acts here [Mosh Potatoes? Gunk?] are clearly outweighed by names like Black Train Jack, American Standard, Face Value, Shudder To Think, Into Another, Swiz, 4 Walls Falling and others. Naturally, these all have varying levels of production quality, but where the sound is reliable, this record manages to carve a very apt model of the amorphous sound of hardcore at the time. Significant is a good way to put it. **dup**

**The Verna Cannon "Movie Star Faces" (Cargo) CD-** Let's start with the positives: Nice violin. Let's move on. Look, it's not like this is bad, it's just not jumping out at me. The format reminds me of Cat Power and Beth Orton, but it is missing the best aspects of both those performers (Cat Power's rawness and vulnerability, Beth Orton's production and fun). The main problem with this album is that it is way over produced, ugh; everything shines when there needs to be a ragged edge or two. Send me the demo for this album and we'll talk. **JM**

**Vietnam "Strictly the Real" (Uprising) CD-** Right now I am listening to Faith No More's "The Real Thing". I am forced to do this in order that I might purge my mind and ears of the wretchedness that is Vietnam. Vietnam is a Brooklyn hardcore band, and by "hardcore" I mean that they really suck. Sometimes it's funny to pretend that tough bands from Brooklyn scare you, and give them good reviews to keep from getting beat up, but in this case it's not funny to do that. In this case I am going to be straightforward and say that the "Biohazard" sound that the hipsters went nuts for in the early 90s was never really that cool, and it's certainly not any cooler now that it is 2001. I'm also going to say that a hip-hop intro to a shitty hardcore record does not lend it any extra credibility of any kind. I'd also like to make it clear to Vietnam that the DMS crew does not intimidate me, and that their cover art sucks. **AP**

**Weakerthans "Left and Leaving" (Sub City) CD-** By now I'm sure you all know that the Weakerthans features John, the former bassist of the now legendary punk rock superstars Propagandhi. In case you forgot, the Weakerthans even covered two Propagandhi songs on their debut album Follow. Now that I got that out of the way, forget about Propagandhi. While the Weakerthans first album may have "fallowed" (that's a joke, not a typo) a bit in Propagandhi's shadow, the Weakerthans sophomore effort proves they have really developed and perfected their own unique sound. The songwriting on this baby is really top notch, especially from a lyrical standpoint. These guys sound like they've taken a vocabulary lesson from Greg Graffin, effortlessly working words like "circumnavigate" into their haunting pop masterpieces. My only complaint is that I could do without some of the songs towards the end of the album, which can't hold a torch to the previous eight tracks. The politics are still here, they're just not as blatant as John's previous band (I told you to forget about them, remember?). As if the music wasn't enough, part of the proceeds of this record are being donated to a non-profit art center. If you want to listen to a remarkable album that benefits a good cause pick this up. You might even learn something. **JB**

**The White Octave "Style no. 6312" (Deep Elm) CD-** My recent introduction to the White Octave came from their song in the latest chapter of the Emo Diaries (see review) and their "Paragraph" song left me wanting more. Luckily "Style no. 6312" contains thirteen more of the White Octave's beautiful and cathartic masterpieces sure to appease me...at least for a while. Stephen Pedersen of Cursive heads the White Octave, and while I am a fan of Cursive, Stephen's new band is exactly what Cursive always wanted to accomplish but never quite pulled off. Palm-muted guitars slowly give way to distorted bliss as Stephen's fragile voice struggles from an apprehensive whisper to a shriek that would make Isaac Brock envious. Each song on the album has it's own distinct dynamics, but they all have one thing in common...brilliance. If you like the Saddle Creek stuff like Bright Eyes and Cursive this is an album that you need in your collection. So much emotion that to label this as "emo" would be an insult. **JB**

**The Zero Boys "Vicious Circle" (Lookout!/Panic Button/Nimrod) CD-** Here's another late wake up call- just like the Gov't Issue record, this album got to me way too late. I can hardly recount how many times I passed up the original copy of this 1982 album. Who can blame me? It was either this bright as hell yellow joint or the first Uniform Choice album. I would never have thought the Zero Boys album was just as powerful. Seriously well played fast punk that connects the 70's Dictators sound with the emerging speedy sound of DC and California hardcore. Really impeccable songs packaged nicely with a killer insert by famed punk educator Jack Rabid. Isolated by their Indiana base, this record was such a surprise that it traveled across the country and inspired this, its second re-issue. Get this if you still don't understand that, once upon a time, it wasn't punk or hardcore, it was just fast and mind-blowing. **dup**



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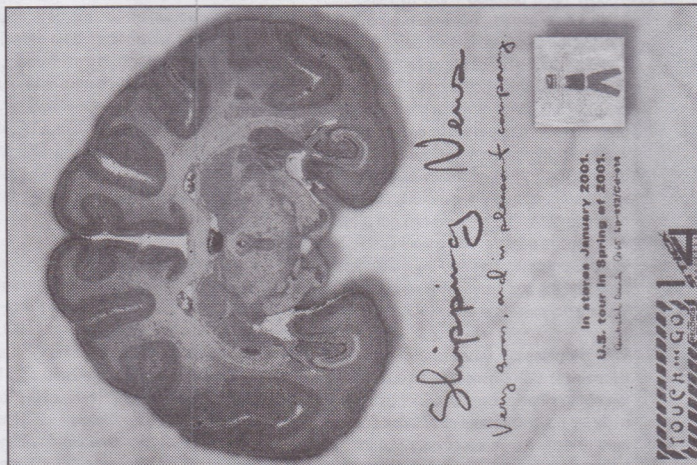
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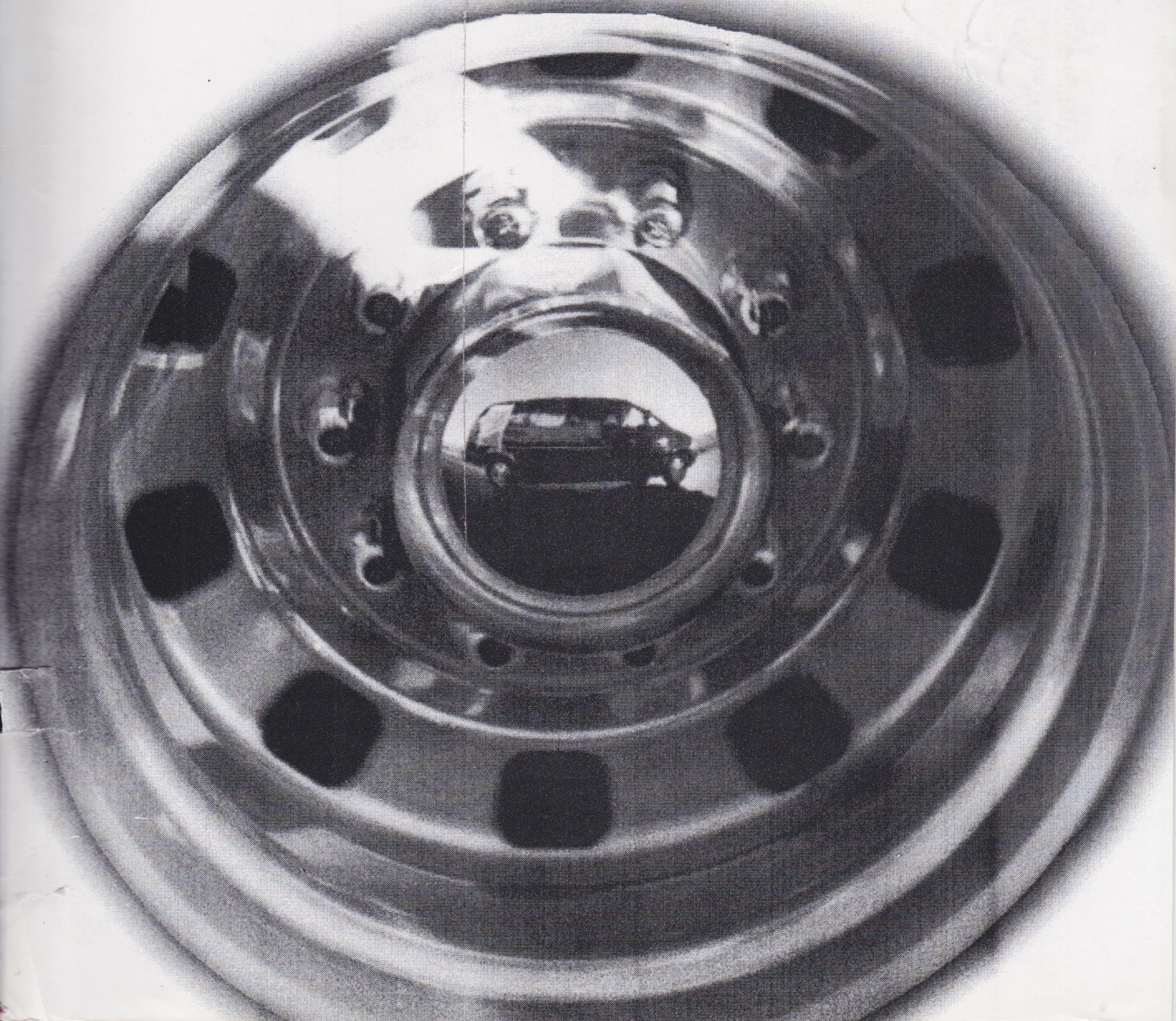
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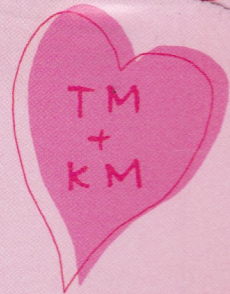
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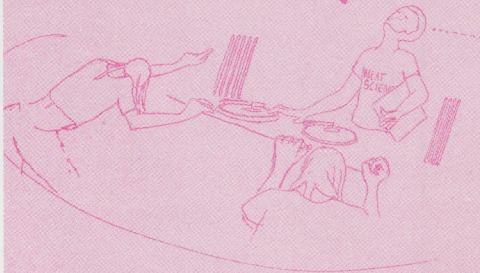
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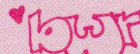
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